

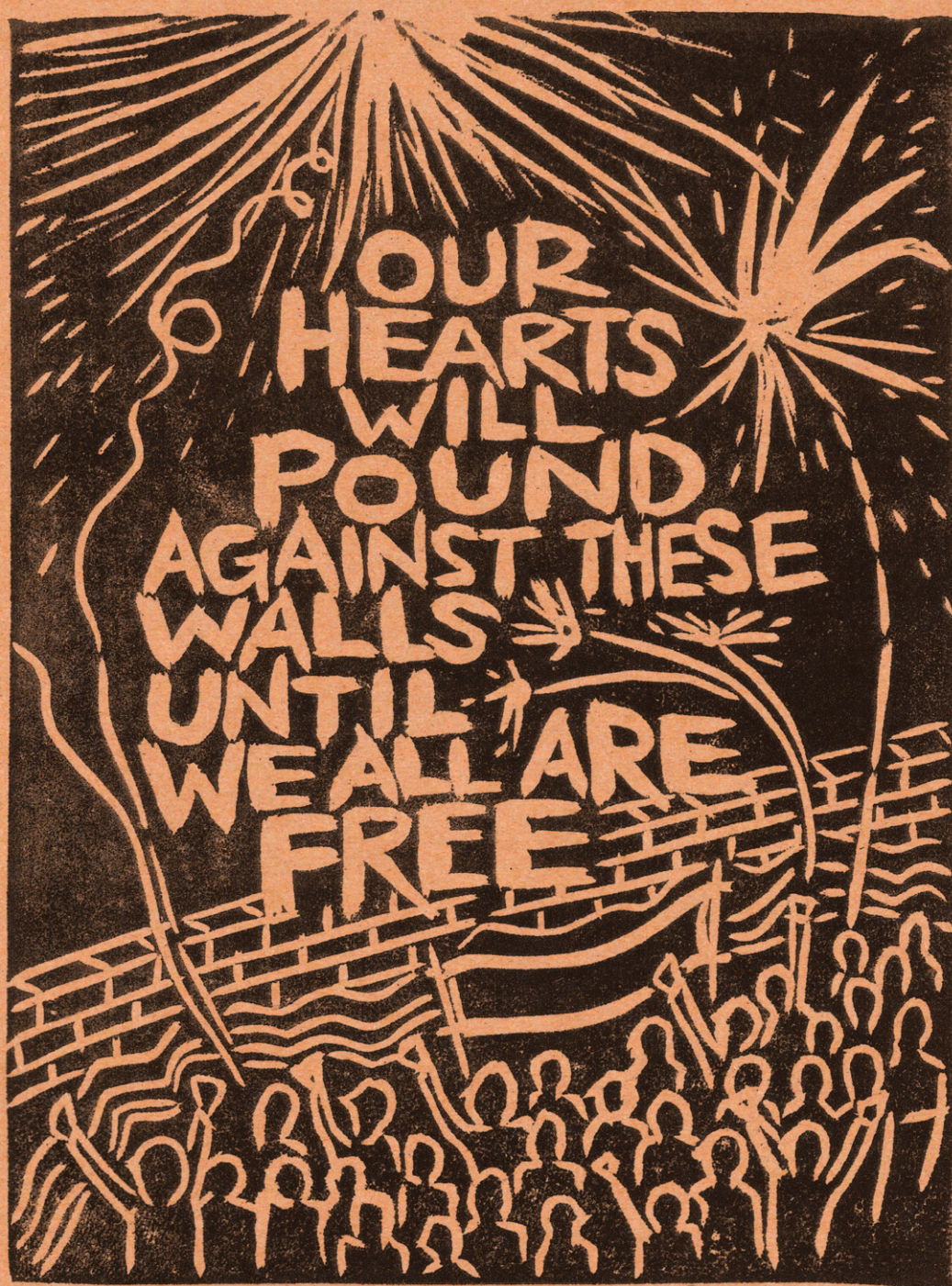
the peak

biotechnology
issue



volume 53
issue 3
winter
2014

free
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The Peak

Volume 53
Issue 3
Winter 2014

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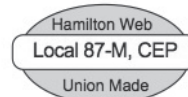


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Cover

"The Delivery" by Rūta
Inside Cover
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Introducing... Biotechnology

BIOTECHNOLOGY: COULD IT BE AN INNOVATIVE 'SOLUTION' TO GLOBAL problems or a stepping stone to an era of scientific neo-colonialism? It is a subject that holds compelling and polarizing perspectives. Broadly speaking, biotechnology is the process of modifying biological systems or living organisms for specific uses. By this definition, the spectrum of processes available under the umbrella term of biotech is vast, encompassing benign to more problematic applications.

In this issue of *The Peak*, we have decided to focus on biotechnology as it relates to contemporary applications of genetic modification (GM). Implicit in this topic is an opportunity to examine and critique not only the methods and results of this technology, but the implications of a rapidly expanding GM industry for social structures.

What kinds of resistance have arisen in direct opposition to this technology?

Within these pages you'll find articles that speak to various facets of the disillusioned GM skeptics. In "Letter to My First-Year Self" (page 6) Debbie writes a letter to the eighteen year-old she used to be – a U of G biology student with idealistic intentions of using her degree to facilitate a more sustainable relationship with the earth. Throughout her years at Guelph, Debbie came to recognize the profound influence of multinational seed cartels, oil and gas companies and corporate ties embedded in the University.

Will Bennington's article, "The Emperor's New Clothes: Genetically Engineered Trees & the Bioeconomy" (page 16) speaks to the growing industry of GE trees, which he describes as "a marriage between the corporate, cut-throat strategy of Monsanto and the industrial forestry practices of multinational timber firms." Bennington addresses the impact GE trees will have on wild forest and ecosystems. He maintains that the bioeconomy will do nothing to challenge the root causes of climate change: social inequity, and systems of oppression like patriarchy, colonialism and anthropocentrism.

Finally, in "Biotechnology & its Critics" (page 10), Bryan Hill links a radical analysis of biotech to a systemic critique of science, technology and progress, offering explanations of basic criticisms of the biotechnology industry and a brief overview of its contemporary history.

This issue also features an interview with The Beehive Design Collective about GM in Mesoamérica (page 28), an article about the historic strike of fast food workers in America (page 25), and an explanation of the recent Supreme Court ruling that declared Canada's sex work laws unconstitutional (page 26). As usual, we have an epic review section full of exciting reads for all you book lovers, as well as report backs and news from antagonistic movements near you!

Check it out!

The Peak Collective

RIGHT 'Frozen Ice'
Photo by Bryan Hill





Upcoming Events

Saturday, January 18th: Panel Discussion: Undoing Border Imperialism

With Harsha Walia, Deepan Budlakoti, and members of the End Immigration Detention Network. (See review of Walia's *Undoing Border Imperialism* on page 37). 7pm on University of Guelph Campus, University Centre Room 103.

Sat and Sun, January 25-26th: Wen-Do Women's Self-Defense

An empowering self-defense course for women of all abilities. 9:30am-5pm both days. E-mail grcged.shailagh@gmail.com for more info.

Tuesday, January 28th: Healing Trauma With Herbs Workshop

Medicine making and basic understanding of herbal properties relevant to trauma.

5:30pm, location TBA. E-mail grcged@gmail.com

January 23rd- February 7th: London Prisoners' Justice Film Festival

Learn, discuss, and strategize about resistance to the prisons, both locally and globally. www.prisonjusticefilm.wordpress.com/

Thursday, February 6th: Book Launch - Raul Gatica's *Shoes on the Rocks*

Migrant justice organizer Raul Gatica reads from his new book and discusses resistance and love.

7pm at 10 Carden, Guelph.

Saturday, March 1st: Kitchener-Waterloo Anarchist Bookfair

Workshops, rad literature, and POC space.

www.kwbookfair.noblogs.org/

Sunday March 9th: Rhythm: From Not Racist to Anti-Racist

Rhythm is a workshop developed to revision anti-racist learning as ceremony, ritual, and remembrance. With Kai Cheng. 10 Carden, Guelph. 1pm.

www.ladysinrayda.wordpress.com, www.guelphpeak.org.

The Peak's Writers' Workshops Series: January - April 2014

Sunday, January 19th: Find Your Voice In Writing with Lisa B. 10 Carden, 1pm

Each one of us has a story, but many of us have been silenced, in one way or another. This two-hour workshop is intended to create a safe-enough space for us to explore writing our own stories, doing gentle exercises to get the pen moving across the page. Come ready to explore in a room without any experts. *Lisa B. is a poet and storyteller living in Guelph. She is regularly moved by the power of other people's poems, songs and stories, (particularly of those who don't refer to themselves as writers). She has been recording her own words since she was six and believes that everyone is a storyteller.*

Sunday, February 16th: Spoken Word, Difference, and Social Justice with Janice Lee. 10 Carden, 1pm

How can we use our voices as poets and storytellers to connect with people in our community? In this workshop we will bridge our differences as individuals through writing, sharing and workshopping our pieces for sharing. *Janice Lee is a singer-songwriter, poet, actor, and activist rooted in Kitchener, Ontario. Her performances engage, enrage, and light a fire in your belly leaving you thirsting for justice and joy!*



Saturday, March 15th: Anxious Articulations: Radical strategies to help you explore difficult ideas through writing with griffin epstein. 10 Carden, 1pm

This workshop explores the process of reading, researching and writing about your own personal opinions and politics. Combining individual and group exercises with facilitated conversation, we will learn ways to structure written arguments and explorations for a variety of different settings. Together, we will brainstorm how to strategically use some of the academic tools for writing. This workshop is designed to be useful to anyone who writes essays or is interested in writing essays about the things that they care about. *griffin epstein is a third year PhD candidate at OISE/University of Toronto in the department of Humanities, Social Sciences and Social Justice Education, a front-line social services and mental health community worker, a crazy person, and a white settler on stolen land. griffin writes poetry, zines and song lyrics, but these days mainly concentrates on academic essay writing.*

...And more to come! See guelphpeak.org for more details.

Callouts: Spring & Summer

Spring 2014: Intergenerational Movements

In the Spring Issue of *The Peak*, we are inviting articles that examine intergenerational movements, communities and support networks. Are there types of communities and struggles that welcome (or do not welcome) the involvement of people of all ages and life circumstances? What is community, anyway? What makes resistance and community sustainable in the long-term? How do we build and maintain movements that are inclusive of families, caretakers, young people and elders? In what ways do social struggles evolve or fizzle out, and what can we learn from them? What keeps us “in it for the long haul”?

In exploring these questions and others, our goal is to contribute to dialogue on how our movements sustain themselves through communities and families (and all the complications inherent in those). We welcome stories that describe experiences

of passing on knowledge, and being reflexive and inspired while fighting against capitalism, patriarchy, white supremacy, prisons and state control.

Suggested topics include: Elders and ancestors; aging; intergenerational struggles and movements; marginalized families and communities (like queer, indigenous, low-income, or racialized families); non-traditional/ non-nuclear families; raising radical/ alternative kids, or being raised by radical/alternative parents; including and learning from kids and youth; building sustainable cultures of resistance; activist burnout; stories of long term prisoners; education systems and their alternatives; and repression and its impacts.

Submission deadline: February 20th, 2014

Summer 2014: Prisons

In 2012, *The Peak* published a special summer issue entitled “Dispatches From Ontario Prisons,” featuring articles and artwork from prisoners incarcerated in Ontario. The issue was a success, finding its way into many prisons and homes. Prisoners who participated overwhelmingly expressed their excitement about having a platform to talk about their experiences. This year, we are again soliciting content for a summer issue on prisons in Ontario and Canada.

Our goal is to present personal stories of prisoners in the criminal justice and immigration systems, as well as analysis of prisons, abolition, and related issues. We welcome prisoner artwork, poetry, prose, and interviews. We also invite articles by writers who are not currently in prison.

As a non-profit magazine, we cannot pay contributors, but hope to amplify contributors’ voices by publishing your work. All contributors will be sent a copy of the magazine to any address, with the option of a free mail subscription for people in prison (although we can’t guarantee that all prisons will accept the magazine).

Suggested topics include: Immigration holds, abolition, transformative justice and alternatives to prisons, hunger strikes and other acts of resistance, prison culture, queer, trans and female prisoner experiences, criminalization of marginalized groups, mental health and prisons, indigenous prisoner perspectives, pregnancy, healthcare, segregation/ “the hole,” sovereignty, Prisoner Justice Day, education, coping, building unity between prisoners, and prisoner support on the outside.

Please note that for this issue, we will be prioritizing submissions from current or former prisoners, and articles on prison or related subjects.

Submission Guidelines for Prisoners:

Please submit original art work if possible (not copies). If you would like your original artwork back please include a mailing address with your submission and we will get it back to you. Also, let us know if and how you want your name to appear in the magazine, and if you want your address published so people can write to you.

Submissions can be mailed to:

The Peak Magazine
University Centre Rm. 259
U of Guelph, Guelph, ON
N1G 2W1

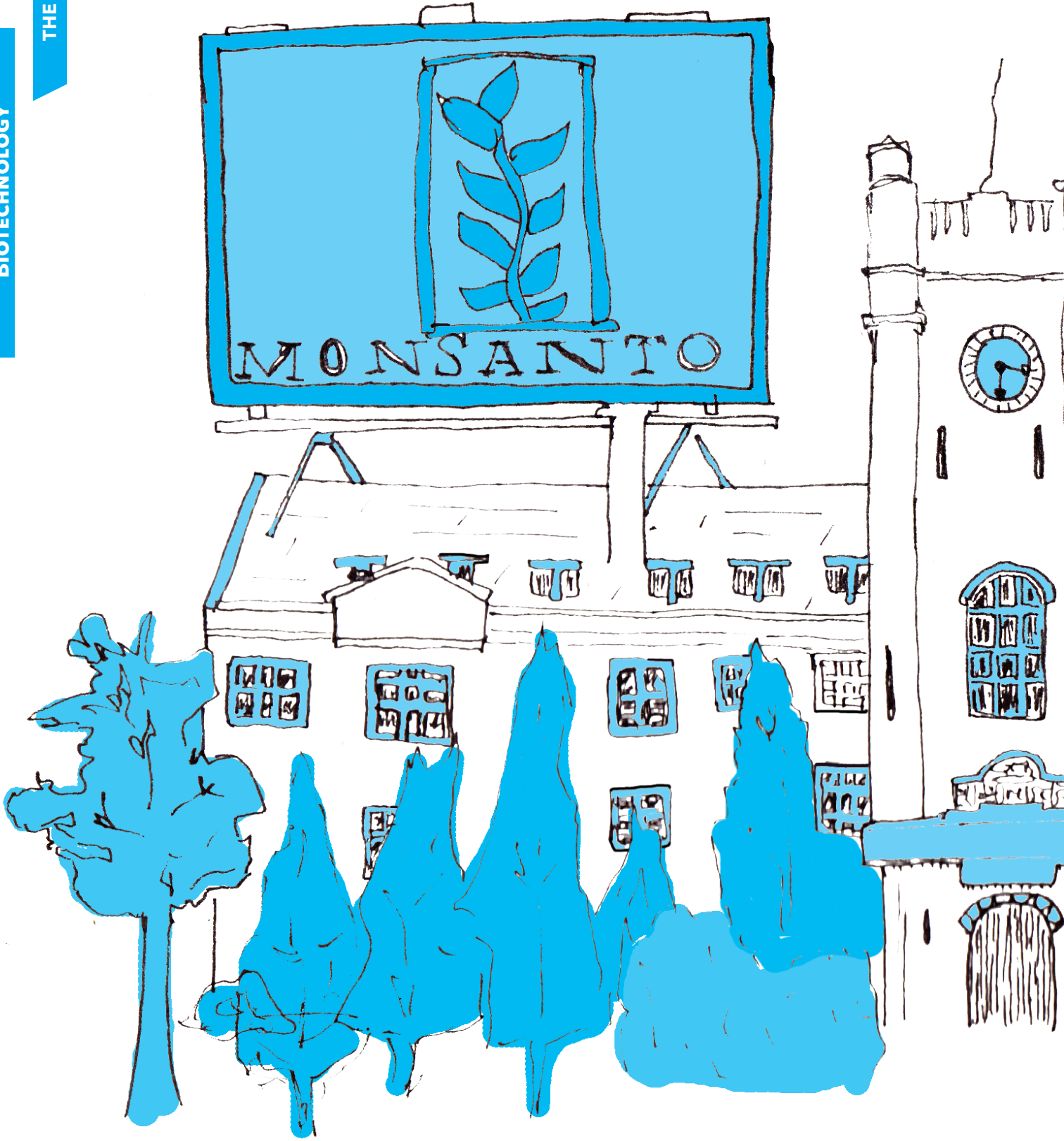
Submission deadline: June 9th, 2014.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

The deadline for submissions to the **Spring Issue** is February 20th, 2014. The deadline for submissions to the **Summer Issue** is June 9th, 2014.

Send submissions to peakcontent@gmail.com in .odt or .rtf formats, please.

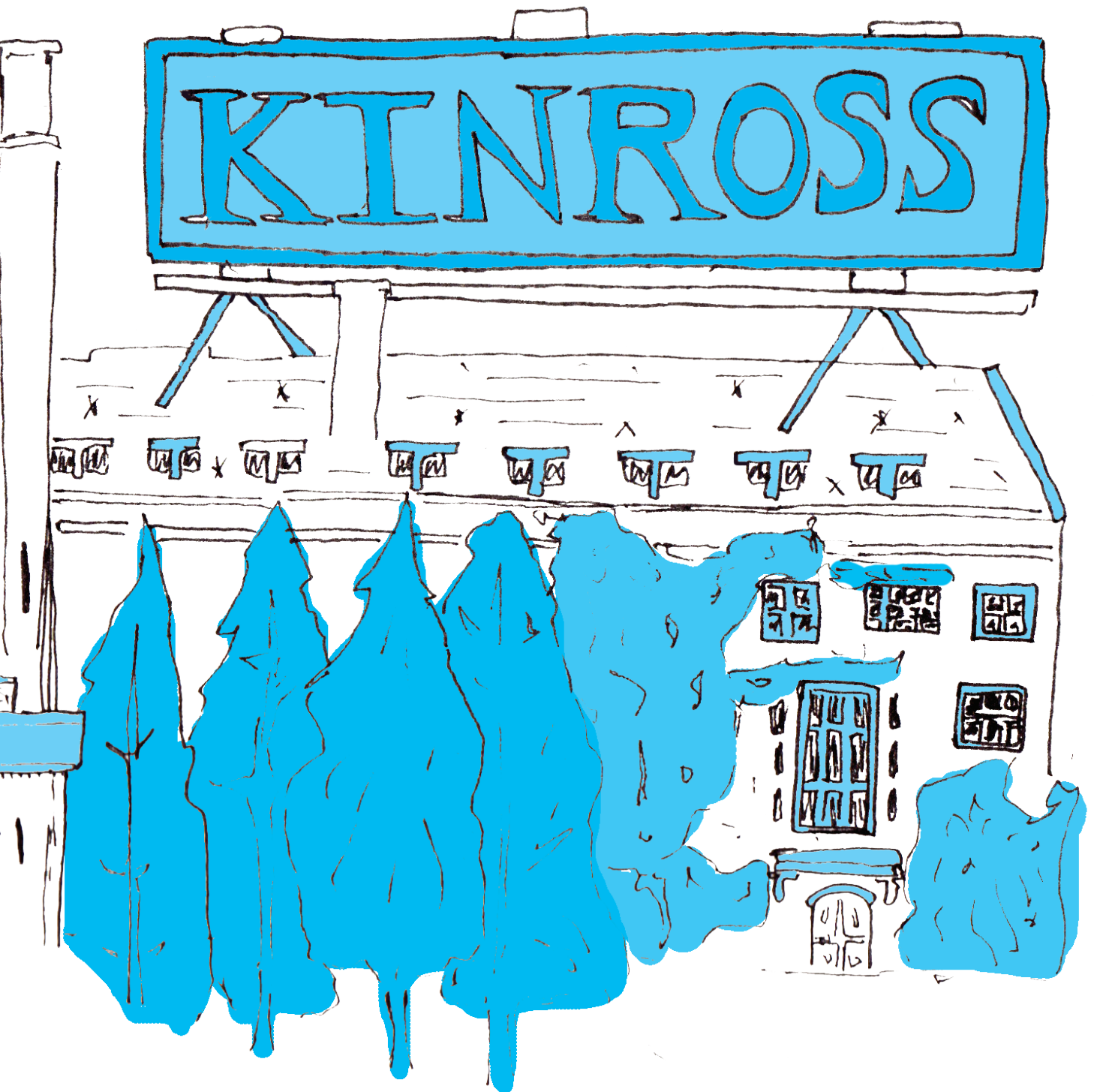
Do you have an idea for an article, but need help making it happen? We’re happy to give you a hand. Give us a shout at peakcontent@gmail.com



.....

LETTER TO MY FIRST YEAR SELF:

Oh, Biologists Won't Save the Forests! By Debbie



PREVIOUS: Kinross Gold Corp. funds several university initiatives, including a "Chair in Environmental Governance," and a "Research in Natural Resource Management" partnership between Canada and Brazil. Illustration by Raine



DEAR FIRST-YEAR SELF: SO YOU'VE DECIDED TO STUDY biology at the University of Guelph. Since you were in elementary school, you've imagined dedicating your life to wild animals, to ending pollution and the destruction of the forests. You want to study ecology, to know the intricacies of natural systems and to contribute to a science of conservation. Most of all, you want to study forestry, because that resonates with your idea of doing something good in this world: growing forests.

These are big-hearted intentions, and I am so glad you hold them. You see your education at the U of G as a stepping stone to something big, something to launch you from the suburb-grown ignorant kid you think you are towards someone more like... the turtle researchers you met in Algonquin Park that summer, or maybe, just maybe somebody like your very favourite: Jane Goodall herself.

The idea of becoming a biologist appeals to your passions, interests and dreams. But beginning a university education means accepting some big premises: that you are an empty vessel when you begin, but you can be filled with an intricate system of knowledge if only you sit in front of professors and experts for four years and absorb their lessons.

But, my dear 18-year-old self, beware! I am writing to you to encourage you to take a step back and take a bigger look, if you can. Never let your big dreams blind you from a critical look around. Come on, I'll show you. We don't even need to go much further than the University of Guelph webpage to start asking good questions.

Even now, your ideas about making change are much better and less backwards than the short-sighted, big-industry backed 'solutions' praised by the University. Given a bit of space and encouragement, you could find creative paths towards protecting the health of waters, ending exploitative mining operations, increasing habitat and protecting what's left of the forest. But I can tell you this won't be

what you will find in university. I hope you look closely and remember that the University of Guelph, in particular, is a rampant green-washing machine.

Look to The Better Planet Project, whose logo is proudly displayed on the front page of the U of G website. This 200-million-dollar fundraising project is prized by the University Administration. It was started by a person named Tye Burt, who is the former president and CEO of a Canadian gold mining company called Kinross Gold Corp. I wonder what a person responsible for destructive and exploitative mining practices in places like Brazil and West Africa knows about creating a better planet!? Tye Burt also held power in the University as Vice Chair for The U of G Board of Governors when he created this project. Today's Board has members representing industries like Maple Leaf Foods, RBC, Maizex seeds, Linamar engineering, and BMO.

The Better Planet Project's main goals include: biotechnology, researching climate change, creating a vast DNA database, bio-fuel, lab-based treatment and cures for cancers, and first-year seminars. All of these proposed solutions are based on an assumption that what is good for industry is good for society and the environment, and these assumptions enter into your first year classroom in a thousand subtle and obvious ways.

What does it mean to be learning in the belly of an institution that funds its research into managing disasters in the ocean, such as oil spills, with money from oil and gas companies? Or whose biology faculty works in partnership with Monsanto? Even government funding, such as the NSERC (Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council), now almost always require that research be used to solve company problems due to mandatory industrial partnerships. This means that research is for increasing the profits of corporations, and leaves out tackling the real problems



the world is facing. (Browse www.uoguelph.ca/research/funding-opportunities to see the limits to research funding opportunities at U of G for yourself).

In 2011, Syngenta, Monsanto, Bayer, BASF, and Dupont donated over 780,000 dollars to research at U of G. These are huge, greedy seed and farm chemical companies that are wreaking havoc on the environment. The largest funding, 6.8 million dollars, came from Boeing Canada to support rocket fuel and nuclear reactor projects that destroy watersheds with radiation and chemical contamination.¹

It can be hard to see the industrial intentions behind some of the research funding. For example, the Boeing-funded project I just mentioned describes itself as a “seeps and springs study,” as if it’s about water instead of about profits and poisons.

It’s also sometimes hard to see the connection between what you are being taught in class and the multi-national companies holding power in the university. This year, you are taking a first-year class called Communicating the Sciences. This was a chance to sit in on a small, seminar-style class with the Dean of Biological Sciences, Mike Emes.² The course content was focused on celebrating Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) — no surprise, because he’s the head of biotechnology funding, mostly interested in GMO cereal seeds, and maintains a cozy relationship with the important funders listed above. When, after yet another lecture of the wonders of genetic engineering, he asks your class, “Now do you think that GM foods are a good thing?” it might be hard not to nod. “You’ll all be great policy makers,” he said with a smile.

Why do your plant biology classes want you to explore topics like crop physiology, plant tissue culture, and genetic engineering of plants? What does this have to do with the passions that brought

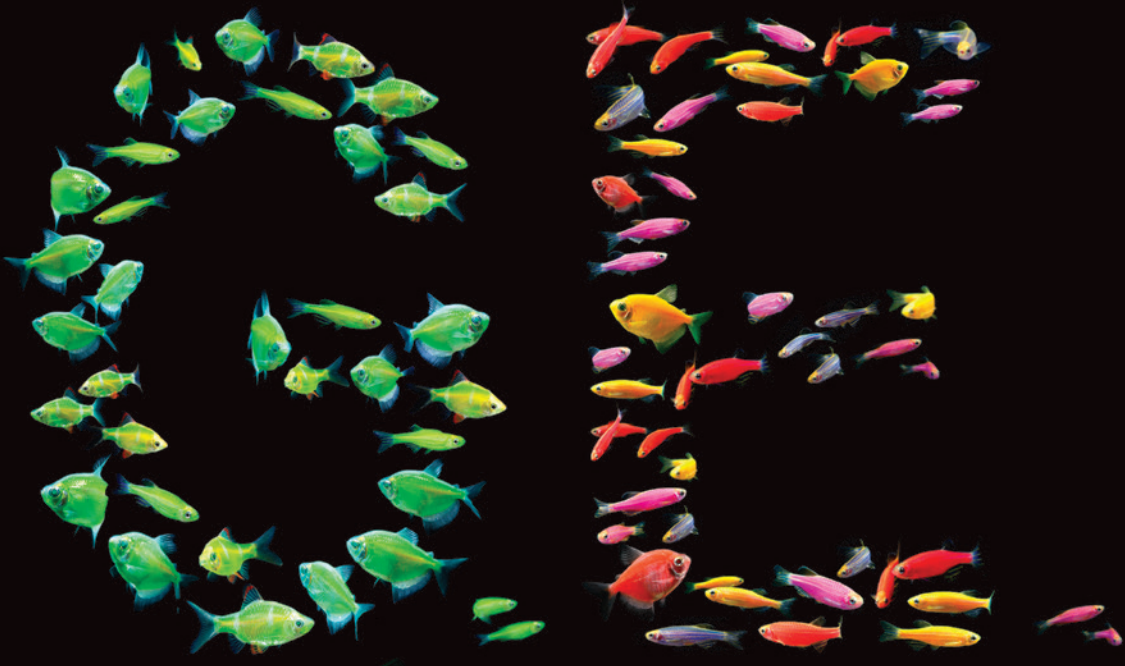
you here? Your classes will be in a dark basement lab with million-dollar microscopes showing what happens when a jellyfish glow gene is inserted into a plant’s DNA — not outside, meeting and learning about plants like you had imagined.

And what about relationships between living beings and natural forces that co-create their environment? Ecology class at U of G will be focused on mathematical justifications for the intensive management of “natural resources”, like the culling of seals in the Atlantic. No space will be left to explore, examine, or even discuss the intricacies of natural systems and the stresses they face today.

You will excitedly sign-up for an Introduction to Forestry class. Oh, dear first-year self, beware the text-book diagrams with tidy arrows flowing from forest to clearcut and back to forest again! It wasn’t until you worked in the industry that first year out of school that you saw it. Clearcuts, leaving no life behind, sprayed with herbicides from above, dead moose, confused bears, streams burdened with silt and poison — to be forever changed to a monoculture of GM trees. Not a forest, but an industry.

Dear first-year self, push past the stifling boundaries of the University! There is so much more to see, to learn. Start small, maybe treat yourself to walks along the Speed and Eramosa rivers. Give yourself time to sit still in the cedar forests along the water that runs under a bridge on Stone Road, just past Victoria. You will be surprised how much you can decide for yourself when your thoughts are grounded in the logic of the skies, the wind and the forests and when you can stay true to your intentions. There is a lot to learn at the University, but it can be hard to separate what actually serves your passions from the industry spin that seeks to channel that passion towards its own ends. 18 year-old self, you’re wiser and braver than you know. Δ

¹“Private research investment rising at University of Guelph,” *Guelph Mercury*, July 9th, 2012. (Link Online)
²Dr. Michael J. Emes’ (Dean, College of Biological Science) profile on U of G website www.uoguelph.ca/mcb/people/faculty/faculty_emes.shtml



LEFT GloFish®, the first commercially available genetically engineered pet. Illustration by Bryan Hill; Source images provided by GloFish®

Biotechnology & Its Critics

As the impacts of biotechnologies gain momentum, so too do their critics. Here, an overview of arguments against biotechnology and the conceptual frameworks that inform them. By Bryan Hill

Biotechnology: "Any technological application that uses biological systems, living organisms or derivatives thereof, to make or modify products or processes for specific use."

– United Nations¹

IF WE TAKE THE BROADEST DEFINITION OF BIOTECHNOLOGY, it becomes a catch-all term, representing everything from home fermentation and the cultivation of plants to genetically engineered trees, genetically modified organisms (GMOs), and biological weapons. Simply put, biotechnology refers to the manipulation of living organisms for human purposes and the creation of commercial products. For the purpose of this article, we will use the term biotechnology as it relates to contemporary biotechnology and genetic engineering, developed after the first successful gene splicing in 1970.

Biotechnology (and the related field of bioengineering) took off as a viable commercial research and development industry in 1980, after a US Supreme Court decision allowed for the patenting of genetically modified organisms. In *Diamond v. Chakrabarty*, General Electric won the right to patent a bacterium designed to break down crude oil, thus enabling companies to study, create and privatize specific organisms and life systems.

Biotechnology research is conducted throughout many industries, including pharmaceuticals, agriculture, aquaculture, petroleum, resources extraction, and the military. Ernst and Young's Global Biotech Report, released yearly at their annual biotech conference, cites that the industry hit record high revenues in 2012, with a marked increase of ten percent to 83 billion dollars annually. A major influence on the industry's continued success has been the expansion of intellectual

property laws worldwide. In order to establish a better understanding of biotechnology, we must grasp what genetic engineering is.

Genetic engineering (GE), or transgenics, is the process of manipulating a living organism by removing, adding or changing their genetic make up. An organism that is designed and created through genetic engineering is considered to be a genetically modified organism (GMO). The first GMOs were bacteria created by Herb Boyer and Stanley Cohen in 1973 and the following year Rudolf Jaenisch created GE mice, the first GE animals. The first genetically modified food was marketed by Calgene in 1994, which was a delayed ripening tomatocalled FlavrSavr®.

GE technology is one of the most widely contested developments within the field of biotechnology. Biotech businesses claim that this technology has the potential to increase crop yields to solve world hunger and make plants more resistant to environmental stresses such as drought and soil salinity.

GENETIC ENGINEERING IN PLANTS

Increasing crop yields through genetics has proven difficult and inefficient. Transgenic crops on the market are overwhelmingly cash crops such as tobacco, corn, cotton, soybean and tomatoes. Herbicide tolerance is the most dominant trait of commercial GE crops today, encouraging excessive use of herbicides.

Pesticides built into the genes of plants are another new development in GE crops. *Bacillus thuringiensis* (or Bt) is a soil bacterium that produces a protein with insecticidal qualities, which was traditionally fermented into a spray pesticide. GE crops have now been developed to exude Bt protein,

¹ UN Convention on Biological Diversity, Art. 2

which, when ingested by bugs and insects, will cause them to stop feeding and die soon after.

There are a variety of plants being engineered to produce substitutes to petroleum, cleaning agents, and pharmaceuticals.

In 2009, eleven transgenic crops were grown commercially in twenty-five countries, the largest of which by area grown were the USA, Brazil, Argentina, India, Canada, China, Paraguay and South Africa.²

GENETIC ENGINEERING AND ANIMALS

Genetically modified animals are used for lab research in the production of agricultural and pharmaceutical products. Genetic modifications in animals include suppressing or otherwise neutralizing specific genes; compromising immune systems in order to increase susceptibility to disease for lab tests; and introducing hormones to promote growth and the ability to express proteins in milk.

Transgenic experimentation uses lab animals for testing reactions and as subjects of genetic mutilation. Critics broadly contest the benefits and merits of animal testing in scientific research, which sees over 3.3 million animals experimented on per year in Canada alone.

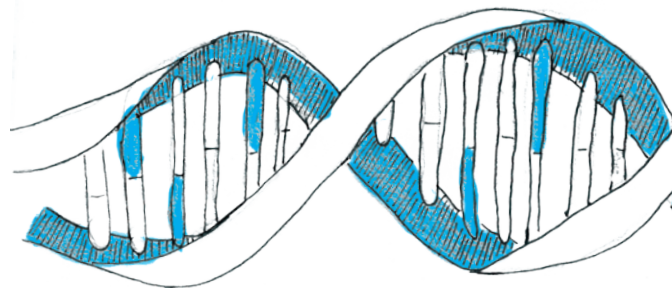
In December 2003 Glofish®, the first GMO designed as a pet, was first sold in the United States.

Recently, the development of GE animals for human consumption has been featured in the news, such as the GE salmon research covered on page 14 of this publication and Guelph's own 'EnviroPig', engineered to better digest and process phosphorus, and which lost its funding in June of 2012.

CRITIQUES OF BIOTECHNOLOGY

Critiques of biotechnology are growing in number, complexity and urgency as biotechnology's impact on economies, food systems, and environments becomes more significant and better understood. These critiques are generally rooted in several currents which reflect the philosophical diversity of the opposition to genetic engineering and modification.

One such current is morality and spirituality. These arguments revolve around the purity of life and the sacred bonds that connect the flora and fauna of the earth. Critics such as Rudolf Steiner suggest that manipulating the genes of plants and animals severs the bonds that connect plant and animal species, separating these plants from the ecosystem and weakening the bonds plants have with each other. Others argue for the sanctity of creation, and condemn scientists as "playing god." Questions have been raised around the ethics and morality of interfering with plant and animal adaptations outside the bounds of natural evolution.



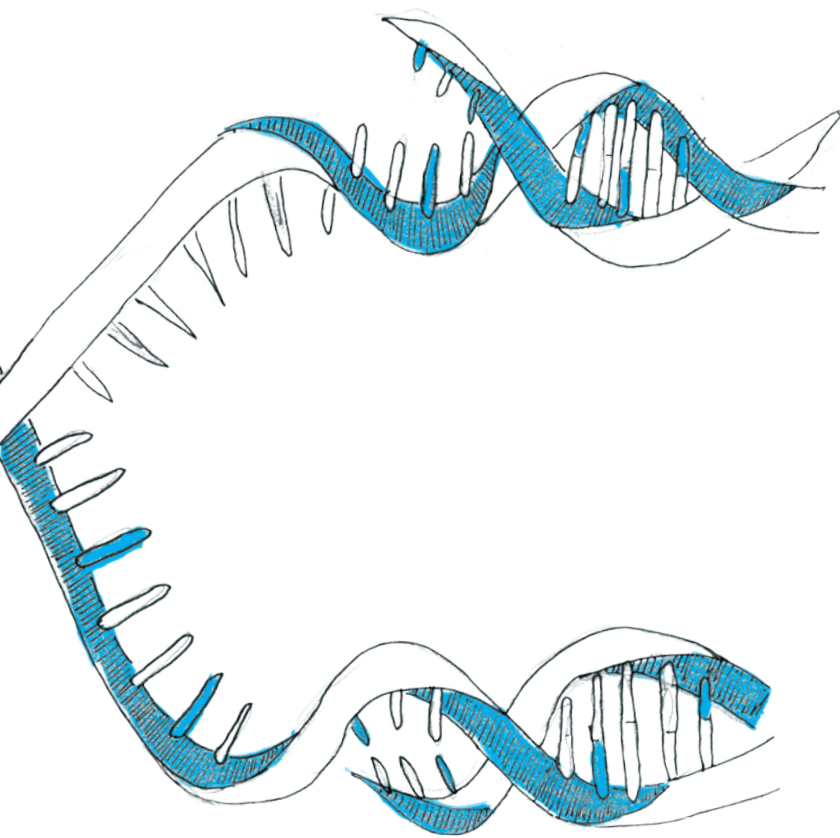
Critics question the generally accepted notion that science and technology are neutral, unbiased fields of study.

These arguments demonstrate the broad spectrum of opposition to biotechnology. They are capable of mobilizing religious communities and of reaching a broad audience. But we should also consider them with caution and if considered without a critical eye, can support similar arguments made by anti-choice movements.

Another current argues around the demonstrated, documented and generally accepted consequences of biotechnological tampering. Examples of these arguments include animal welfare in lab testing; GM plants out-competing wild and natural flora and fauna; GMO foods flooding markets and, with the help of free trade agreements, deflating crop market values; and destroying subsistence and traditional farming the world over.

As with any new technology, many of the consequences remain unknown. Many arguments against biotechnology rely heavily on 'what if' questions and fear of future repercussions. Arguments critique a willingness to allow the advancement of genetic splicing, test crops and commercial production of GMOs without the full knowledge of how they will affect the ecosystems they are in. Science has a long history of

² Global Status of Commercialized Biotech/GM Crops: 2009 ('ISAAA Brief 41-2009').



LEFT
Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA). Illustration
by Raine

experimental blunders, which have spiralled out of control stemming from ignorance and government/corporate pressures. An iconic example of scientific blunder was the introduction of Cane Toads into Australia in an effort to battle crop pests, which not only failed to stop the pests but, as the toads multiplied, contributed to imbalances in the local ecosystem.

These arguments continue to resonate with many people, pointing towards an undercurrent of distrust towards the relationship between science and business and drawing on historic examples of well-intentioned scientific experiments leading to disastrous effects. A compelling example of the unknown consequences of scientific experiments is the discovery of atomic energy, which led to the creation and deployment of the atomic bomb.

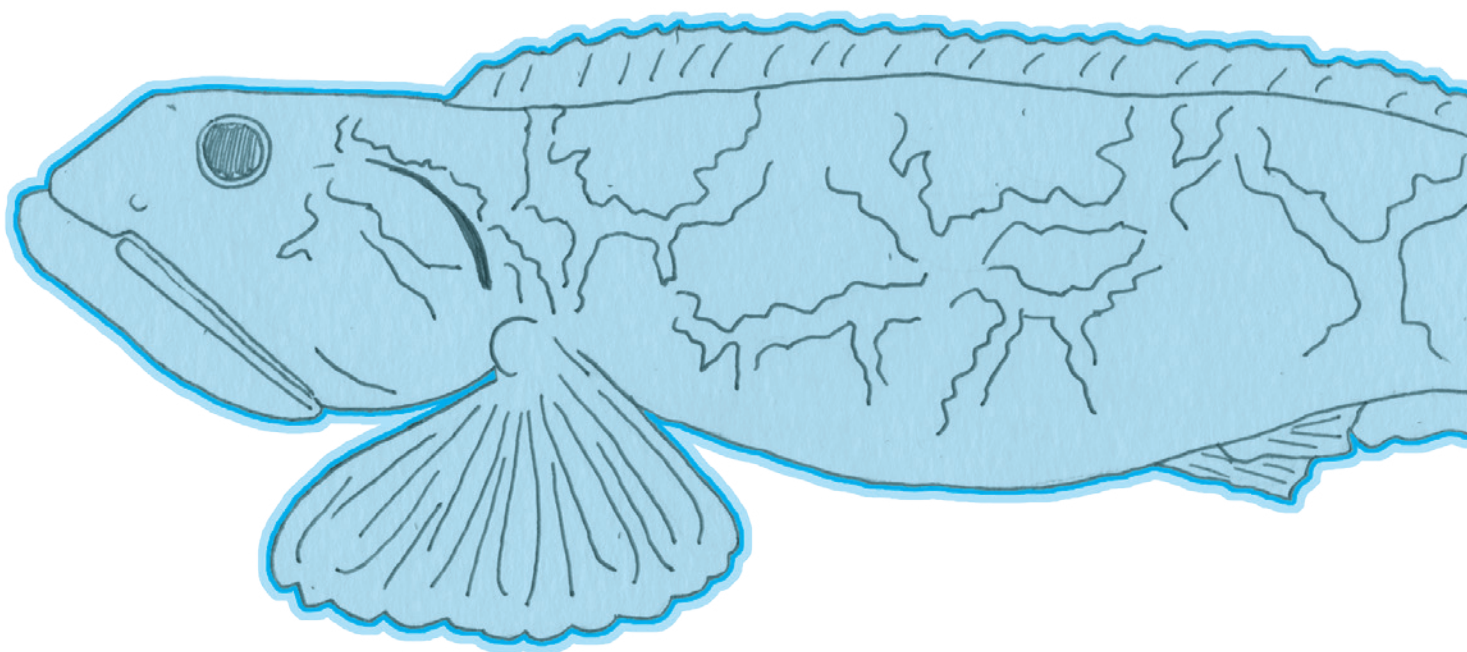
As a complement to the arguments above, some anarchists and radical environmentalists take these arguments one step further, challenging the systemic views of science and technology. These critics question the generally accepted notion that science and technology are neutral, unbiased fields of study. They argue that there are negative implications of a widespread trust and confidence in science and technology which leads us to a popular opinion that these fields are at the forefront of development and progress, implemented by scientists who help individuals and the environment as unsung heroes of society.

These systemic critiques look at the influence and control that military, government and

business-driven industries exert over research and development. They point out, among other things, these industries' dependence on resource extraction, and how research and funding have become a cyclical system in which research is defined by the funding it receives.

Implicit within many of these critiques is also a critique of progress. As scientific research continues to refine its work, it has become the front line in the continued domination of nature, life and human beings down to cells and atoms. We must ask ourselves, have all the newest scientific discoveries and automation of industry and work really improved our quality of life? Has 'progress' lessened class divisions within society? Is alienating us from the food and land that provides us sustenance worth the economic benefits? How has isolation increased as we rely on computers and cellphones more and more to connect with friends and family?

Biotechnology and the related fields of modern science continue to expand their research and develop new fields where they overlap, such as nanobiotechnology, nanorobotics and bioengineering. As each new field of science and technology grows, critiques and resistance to it will grow as well. For instance, when the first bacterial GMO was released into the environment in 1987, it was sprayed on two test fields of strawberries and potatoes in California. Saboteurs attacked both sites the night before the test. The world's first GMO trial site attracted the world's first GMO trial site saboteurs. [△](#)



ABOVE: Ocean Pout
By e.war

Frankenfish: GM Salmon

Approved for Commercial Production in Canada

¹ The ocean pout (*Zoarces americanus*) is an eel pout found in the northwest Atlantic ocean, off the coast of New England and eastern Canada. The fish has antifreeze proteins in its blood, giving it the ability to survive in near-freezing waters. (Wikipedia)

How political and economic investments in genetically modified aquaculture lead to the AquaAdvantage Salmon®, the first GM animal approved for human consumption. By Allison Parker

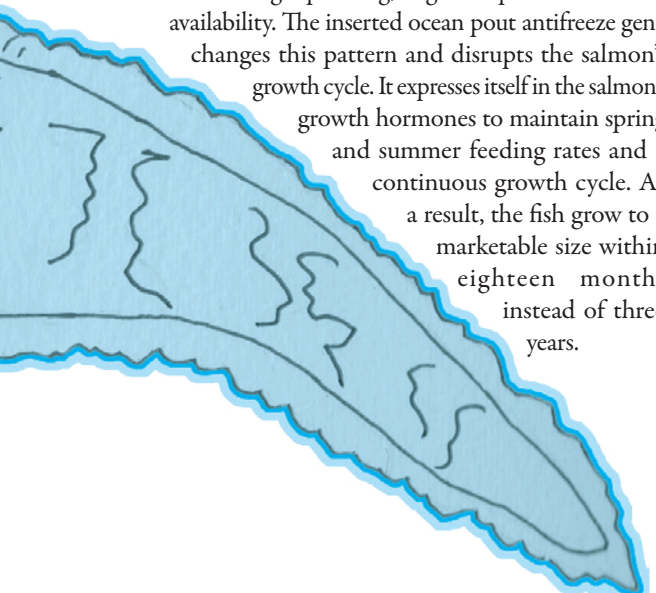
"I think there's a simple choice here. Are you going to believe the professionals, the skilled scientists, or the people that are constantly beating the drum that there is some sort of conspiracy between the government and industry to somehow damage the environment?"

— Ron Stotish, AquaBounty CEO

ON NOVEMBER 24TH, 2013 ENVIRONMENT CANADA granted the US biotechnology firm, AquaBounty Technologies Inc. permission to export up to 100,000 genetically modified

(GM) fish eggs a year from a hatchery in Prince Edward Island to a Panamanian facility for rearing. This is the first time an engineered animal has been approved for commercial production, and many consider this decision by Ottawa a significant push for the US FDA (Food and Drug Administration) to approve AquaAdvantage Salmon® — AquaBounty's pilot GM fish — for human consumption.

AquaAdvantage Salmon® have been engineered to include the growth hormone of the chinook salmon and the anti-freeze proteins inside of the ocean pout¹. Normally, the growth hormone production inside salmon decreases during the cold winter months, a



body function, I would imagine — developed over time through spawning, migration patterns and food availability. The inserted ocean pout antifreeze gene changes this pattern and disrupts the salmon's growth cycle. It expresses itself in the salmon's growth hormones to maintain spring and summer feeding rates and a continuous growth cycle. As a result, the fish grow to a marketable size within eighteen months instead of three years.

The inserted ocean pout antifreeze gene changes this pattern and disrupts the salmon's growth cycle.

Researcher Krista Oke of Memorial University, Newfoundland bred GM salmon, supplied by AquaBounty, with wild brown trout, and found that nearly half the resulting hybrids carried the genetic modification. When these GM hybrids were put in a tank that mimicked a natural environment with wild salmon and brown trout, the results were that the hybrids out competed the other fish for food and reduced the growth of GM salmon by eighty-two percent and non-GM salmon by fifty-four percent. This led to the conclusion that, in the event of an escape, GM fish and their hybrids would present a high risk to Atlantic salmon and wild fish stocks.


Aquaculture is the fastest-growing food industry in the world, and salmon farming is the fastest-growing sector in global aquaculture. Thus, the political and environmental implications of GM salmon are huge.

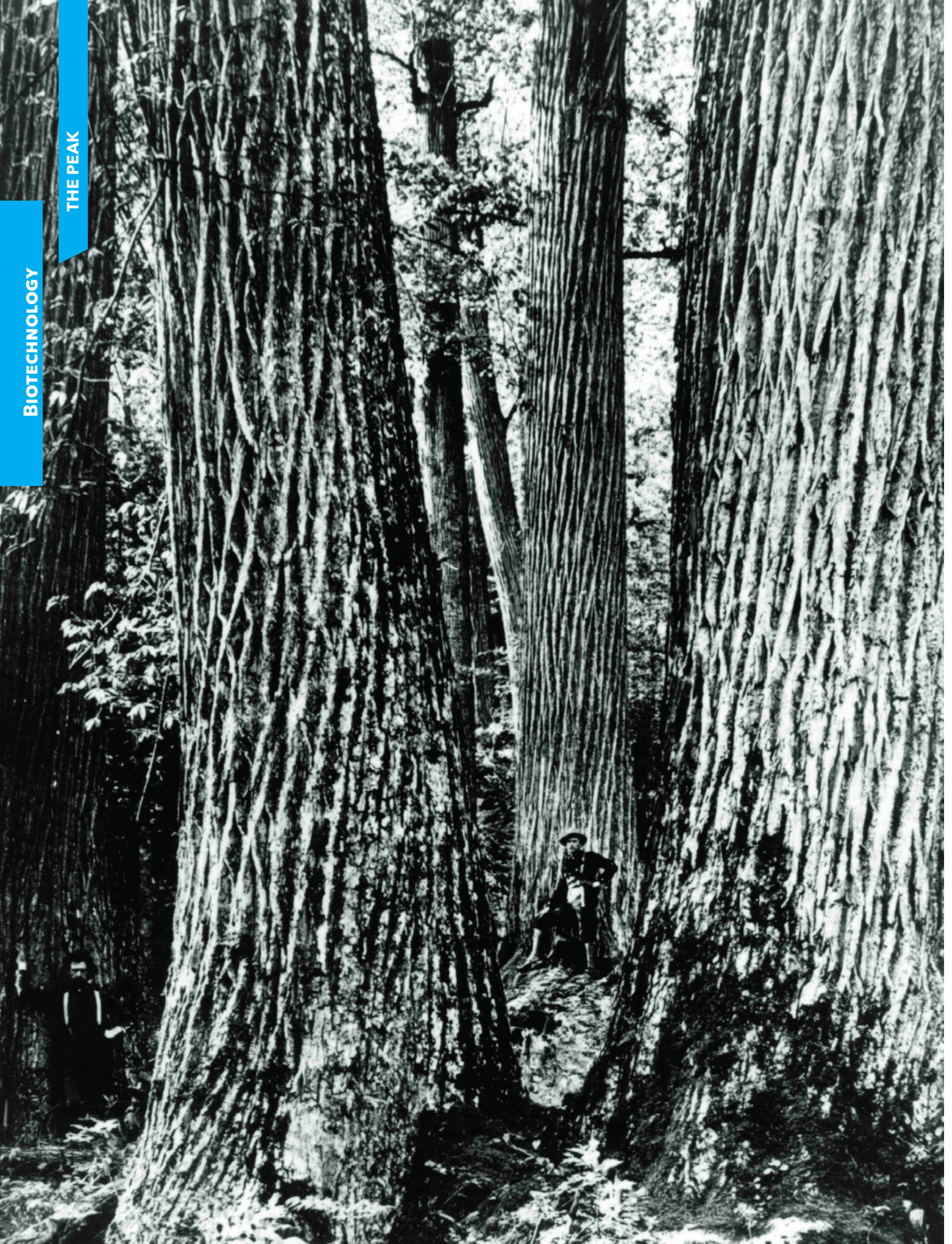
Proponents of AquaAdvantage Salmon® argue that the methods in which the fish are reared (inland facilities away from major waterways) offer a safeguard against escape, but this is no guarantee. Beyond the possibility of a transportation, environmental or other mishap, one day a company will realize that they can make more money growing genetically modified fish in the open ocean than in an inland facility, which have much higher maintenance costs.

The developers also state that even if specimens were to escape, that they have engineered the salmon to be female and sterile; however they can only guarantee this ninety five percent of the time.

GM salmon can be seen as another way biotechnology companies are trying to monopolize and control food and life systems. The AquaAdvantage Salmon® could privatize the Atlantic salmon. Salmon farmers, like corn and soy farmers, could be stuck having to buy from large companies who own the genetic material, or sued if their fish stock accidentally breeds with the patented salmon.

AquaBounty has said that their GM salmon will create a more viable and sustainable salmon industry by lowering the cost of salmon and thus making fish more accessible. Yet, raising salmon for market consumption faster, by extension, puts increased pressure on wild fish stocks required to feed the farmed salmon. If AquaBounty is correct in their assumption that GM salmon will lower the price of fish and thus increase the market for farmed salmon, the demand for fish meal and oil from smaller wild fish such as sardines, anchovies, herrings and other “fodder” fish, will also increase.

GM technology has been touted as a savior, a way to provide more and more food for the open-ended expansion of human beings on the planet. Yet the idea of GM “feeding the world” in response to climate change is a band-aid solution. While climate change has led to crop shortages “drought resistant” GM technology distracts from the underlying problem of global capitalism. It is the market that creates food shortages through sudden inflation and it is the market that profits off of disparity and shortages by increasing the price of commodities to meet demand. It is frustrating that while companies like Monsanto, Du Pont and Syngenta claim the “substantial equivalence” of their engineered technologies, they maintain a strict distinction between their patents in comparison to other strains of crops. But you can't play both sides, either they are different or not. The reality is that GM Technology has fundamentally altered our relationship with the planet and by creating artificial food life in laboratories we continue to distance ourselves from and warp our associations to the animals and the life forms we nourish our bodies with. 



LEFT Old-growth American Chestnuts in North Carolina circa. 1909 (Forest History Society)
Photo by Sidney V. Streater

The Emperor's New Clothes: Genetically Engineered Trees & the Bioeconomy

A Global Justice Ecology Project campaigner describes the new 'Bioeconomy' and how the GE-tree industry plans to cash in on emerging markets for biofuel in the southeast. By Will Bennington

THE BIOTECH INDUSTRY, WHICH SEEKS TO manipulate and own the very molecules that comprise living organisms, is merely an extension of the colonization of indigenous lands and peoples. Based on the assumption that the commodification of nature, global extraction, and trade of resources can and should continue indefinitely, biotech offers a capitalist-driven solution to the food, fuel and resource crises facing humanity.

The very idea that genetic engineering is an okay thing to do is predicated on the assumption that humans can, and should dominate all life. And that we can do so safely while understanding the complex interconnections of life spanning from the smallest cells of a pine tree right up to the intricacies of a forest ecosystem.

Over the past several years, biotechnology companies like Monsanto and DuPont have come under increasing

scrutiny from people worried about the impacts of genetically engineered food crops.

These companies have ushered in a new era of increased corporate control over seeds and food production, the threat of patented seed strains to biodiversity and

Over the past several years, biotechnology companies like Monsanto and DuPont have come under increasing scrutiny from people worried about the impacts of genetically engineered food crops.

a swift move toward a food system that relies on chemical and petroleum inputs to sow cheap, dangerous food-like substances which threaten consumer health. In response to this, millions across the world are rising up against the hegemonic power of Monsanto and the agribusiness industry.

In the US, Monsanto and their slick public relations strategy have managed to avoid a crisis by defeating nearly every statewide attempt to label or ban GE food crops. However, as resistance to GE foods remains focused on this one company, a new arm of biotechnology has emerged seemingly overnight, unscathed, and poised to succeed.

The biotech tree industry (or GE tree industry) is a marriage between the corporate, cut-throat strategies of Monsanto and the industrial forestry practices of companies like International

Paper, Weyerhaeuser, Suzano Papel e Celulose and other multinational timber firms. Fueled by a neoliberal vision of building a new 'Bioeconomy,'¹ the dream of fast growing, highly efficient and easily processed trees has been developing for over two decades in university, government and corporate labs across the world.

The Bioeconomy, an economic paradigm which requires re-engineering living organisms and the entire global economy, is offered as a 'solution' to two of the most pressing problems threatening the global elite today: a way to avert the climate and ecological crisis without challenging their control and power; and a way to replace the raw materials of the industrial economy (on which wealth and power subsist) with feedstocks that will, in theory, grow forever.

The Bioeconomy — and GE trees, which are a core component of its success — will do nothing to challenge the root causes of climate change, social inequity, and systems of oppression like patriarchy, colonialism and anthropocentrism. Nor will they take pressure off already devastated ecosystems or address overconsumption, the main driver of deforestation. In fact, the Bioeconomy requires an intensification of resource extraction in colonized lands, continuing the exploitation of the global South to provide raw materials for northern countries and the Euro-American Empire. The ideology which drives the Bioeconomy views the natural world as an infinitely exploitable array of inputs, the sole purpose of which is to drive economic growth.

DIVORCING THE FOREST FROM THE TREE IN THE SOUTHEASTERN US

GE organisms are fundamentally different from their natural relatives. GE trees, being bred for cold-tolerance, faster growth, herbicide and pest resistance and other traits, may be the penultimate development of scientific tinkering we have seen to date. Only nanotechnology and synthetic biology surpass tree engineering in creating novel forms of life with unknown consequences. Few dare to imagine where science might venture past synthetic biology.

Ignoring the complex ecological roles that trees play in various ecosystems, scientists are manipulating the genetic fabric of life, DNA, to breed trees that will fully satisfy the greed of corporations and a culture hell-bent on destroying the planet. Unable to appreciate trees for what they are, as various cultures have done for thousands of years, tree geneticists are fixated on creating a tree that can better serve the industrial economy, playing god until they get the desired results. Some may call it arrogance; others, insanity.

Companies like US-based ArborGen — the leading producer of enhanced tree seedlings worldwide — claim their "purpose-grown" trees will take the pressures of industrial forestry off so-called wild forests, allowing a more efficient, orderly divide between land intended for timber production and land intended for conservation or preservation. Yet, in reality they are just providing new feedstocks to increase production for various industries without ensuring an overall gain in non-industrial forest reserves.

The Bioeconomy and GE trees... will do nothing to challenge the root causes of climate change, social inequity, and systems of oppression like patriarchy, colonialism and anthropocentrism.

This facade of conservation does not justify the intensification and expansion of decades of ecologically destructive plantation management. While industrial plantations of GE trees may be better than the alternative (subdivisions or strip malls), they are no substitute for ecosystem-wide conservation and restoration. Restoration and conservation of forests, which is critical to stave off the climate and biodiversity crises, will not be achieved via indirect measures like establishing highly efficient factory forests. What is needed is direct conservation and preservation of species and age-diverse forests that resemble those of pre-industrial and pre-European settlement. In many parts of the world, allowing Indigenous and forest-dependent communities to remain on their traditional lands has proven to be the most effective way to stop deforestation and maintain dynamic, intact and resilient ecosystems.

While such a momentous undertaking surely faces hurdles in the current context (given private property regimes, government regulation and corporate rule, among other things), GE trees are certainly no viable alternative.

ArborGen's pilot project for their GE crop production — which apparently lacks any sort of 'land ethic' beyond efficient use — is, ironically, eucalyptus. Ideal for production, eucalyptus is fast-growing and can be used for pulp products and marketed as a 'bioenergy' crop. ArborGen hopes with a little bit of genetic modification, it can grow even faster, resist herbicides, and succeed in colder climates.

¹ The... 'Bioeconomy' describes the idea of a new industrial order that relies on biologically-based materials, technologies and 'services'... using techniques such as synthetic biology and nanotechnology to transform living 'biomass' into fuels, chemicals and power. (ETC Group)

Eucalyptus trees, native to Australia, are classified as invasive in Florida, California and Hawaii. They are also known to be highly flammable. Non-native eucalyptus trees fueled the 1991 Oakland, California firestorm that burned thousands of homes and killed twenty-five people. These traits have led GE eucalyptus trees to be nicknamed ‘flammable kudzu’ and ‘living firecrackers.’

Even the US Forest Service has reported concerns that GE eucalyptus trees planted in the southern US would use twice as much water as native forests in the same region. In South Africa and Chile, eucalyptus plantations are known for drying up ground water and causing or worsening droughts and displacing local populations. In Brazil, members of the Landless Workers Movement have routinely destroyed nurseries of eucalyptus seedlings because of the impacts the plantations have on their communities.

Enabling eucalyptus to grow in colder climates will spread these disastrous traits to new bioregions, not just in the US, but globally. The United States Department of Agriculture Plant and Animal Health Inspection Service (USDA APHIS) is currently working on a draft Environmental Impact Statement for ArborGen’s petition to deregulate their cold-tolerant GE eucalyptus. If USDA APHIS decides to deregulate GE eucalyptus, ArborGen hopes to sell hundreds of millions of seedlings each year across the southern US for planting in pulp and bioenergy plantations. Parts of the southeastern US have experienced intense drought over the past decade, and are in no state for plantations of flammable, water-greedy trees.

These plans haven’t gone unchallenged. This past April, over 37,000 people submitted comments to the USDA opposing the deregulation of GE eucalyptus. Only four comments were submitted in favor, and one of those was from a representative of International Paper, one of ArborGen’s joint owners.

During the International Tree Biotechnology 2013 Conference, held in Asheville, North Carolina in late May, over 200 demonstrators descended upon the conference center, denouncing ArborGen and other GE tree companies. Because the southern US sits in the crosshairs for disastrous GE eucalyptus plantations, the tree was a major focus of the demonstrations, which included five arrests over four days.

In 2010, several organizations, including Global Justice Ecology Project, the Center for Food Safety and the Center for Biological Diversity, sued the USDA for allowing ArborGen to establish test plots of GE eucalyptus in seven southern states.

AMERICAN CHESTNUT: THE TROJAN HORSE

ArborGen has faced massive public opposition from the growing movement opposed to GE trees, compounded by industry ties to Monsanto — the company was an initial investor in the venture that eventually became ArborGen, and many of ArborGen’s executives are former Monsanto employees — GE tree proponents are embarking on a plan to win over public support. Conflating high-tech, risky science with environmental conservation, ArborGen, The Monsanto Foundation and the Forest Health Initiative, among others, are funding efforts to restore the nearly extinct American chestnut with GE blight-resistant chestnuts.

GE tree companies and odd bedfellows like Duke Energy² are getting in on the chestnut restoration effort a little late. As most chestnut enthusiasts know, a non-GE, blight-resistant American chestnut is nearly a reality. This was achieved through traditional crossbreeding and propagation of seed from naturally resistant trees. In fact, there is a near-fanatical zeal in the chestnut restoration world right now, as they are on the brink of success after over 40 years of work. Because the chestnut was virtually eliminated by a blight introduced in the late 1800s, restoration of the charismatic tree would represent the first ‘de-extinction’ event of its kind.

However, a blight-resistant GE chestnut, developed by researchers at the State University of New York for Environmental Science and Forestry, is stealing the spotlight, at least in the mainstream media. A recent flood of articles in publications like *The Economist* leaves readers with the assumption that, without genetic engineering, there will be no restoration of the American chestnut. This is likely related to the increased corporate funding of GE chestnut research.

Duke Energy, which has funded GE chestnut research, is interested in the opportunities afforded by the American chestnut for various corporate greenwashing schemes to promote false solutions to climate change. They plan to use American chestnut trees to “reclaim” former mountaintop-removal coal mining sites. This will help them comply with federal law while also allowing them to use the carbon stored by the trees as carbon offsets to avoid reducing their pollution.

They can also use the starch-rich chestnuts from the trees to manufacture ethanol. American chestnuts are considered the equivalent of corn in production per acre. Restoration is a convenient guise for a potential cash crop, helping to clean up the dirty image of one of the more nefarious energy companies in the US. Adding insult to injury, GE

² A hydro and gas company serving the midwest and southeast US.

chestnuts were planted at the New York Botanical Garden, near where the blight was first discovered in the early 1900s.

Unlike other GE trees, such as poplar and pine, GE American chestnuts are being designed with the express intent of releasing them into wild forests. And in order for them to survive in a forest setting, they must be allowed to cross with wild American chestnuts. The impacts of the uncontained and uncontrollable contamination of natural forests with genetically engineered American chestnuts are not being independently studied. The USDA is relying on the fox to guard the henhouse, and gave half a million dollars to GE chestnut researchers at University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry to evaluate the environmental impacts of the GE American chestnuts.

At the American Chestnut Foundation's annual meeting in Washington, DC in October, lead GE chestnut researcher William Powell stated that he hopes to "get these things out there as quick as possible," a position hardly compatible with a thorough evaluation of their impacts.

If ultimately approved for unregulated release into the environment, GE American chestnuts will open the door for approval of other genetically engineered versions of native trees, including poplars and pines. Chestnuts are the perfect Trojan horse for the GE tree industry, leading the public to believe that even conservation of the natural world can't succeed without high-tech manipulations and risky science.

GE TREES AND BIOENERGY

The southern forest products industry has a lot at stake in the Bioeconomy. As a video from the Southeastern Partnership for Integrated Biomass Supply Systems explains, the climate and existing dominance of industrial forestry and agriculture in the southeastern United States puts the region in an ideal position to build a new biofuels industry, "from the ground up."³

As part of this effort, ArborGen and the University of Florida teamed up to develop high-terpene, GE loblolly pines for processing into liquid biofuels. Their research is specifically intended to creating more terpene, which naturally occurs in loblolly pine, for use in the aviation industry. Researchers estimate that, over ten years, a 25,000 acre plantation of 'high terpene' pine would provide 100 million gallons of terpenes. These terpenes could be used as a drop-in biofuel for jet engines. US airline consumed over 16 billion gallons of fuel in 2012, over half of which was for domestic flights alone.

In 2011, ArborGen and U of F received a 6.3 million dollar grant from the US Department

of Energy for this work. They received another one million-dollars in 2013 to continue the project.

There are already over thirty million acres of pine plantations in the southeastern US. Over sixty percent of pine seedlings planted every year come from the North Carolina State University Tree Improvement Cooperative, of which ArborGen is a full member. Clearly, ArborGen has an enormous market opportunity to develop a new line of loblolly pine, tailored specifically to the needs of jet engines.

A SECRET WORTH HIDING

This influx of money into GE tree research may explain why the University of Florida recently silenced opposition to GE trees on their Gainesville, Florida campus. In October, members of an organizing tour put on by the Campaign to STOP Genetically Engineered Trees were thrown off the University of Florida campus and threatened with arrest after a planned speaking event there was unexpectedly cancelled.

The tour, entitled "The Growing Threat: Genetically Engineered Trees and the Future of Forests" was scheduled to present at U of F on Monday October 28th, but only days before, the student organizing the event was informed that the room he had reserved had been cancelled. The tour participants were given several excuses for the cancellation, and when they tried to gain access to the building to ask about moving to a different room, they were confronted by U of F police, threatened with arrest, and banned from the campus for three years.

Days after the U of F incident, the tour learned that it was being monitored by the FBI when an official at Palm Beach State College informed a student organizer she had been contacted by the domestic surveillance agency and warned that members of the Earth First! movement were involved with the GE trees tour, and could become disruptive.

While the debate continues around the benefits versus the dangers offered by genetically engineering loblolly pines to produce up to five times the amount of flammable terpenes, it is clear that the establishment is unwilling to allow room to even discuss the subject. The actions of U of F, a public academic institution, demonstrate they care more about protecting their corporate relationships and government funding than fostering a space for free thinking and information sharing.

As efforts in the Southeastern US ramp up to convert forests and farmland into highly efficient plantation factories stocked with machine-like trees, the implications of success for the GE tree industry resonate worldwide, along with resistance to it.

³ [www.se-ibss.org/
videos/ibss-outreach/
biofuel-solutions](http://www.se-ibss.org/videos/ibss-outreach/biofuel-solutions)



LEFT Demonstrators outside of the Tree Biotechnology 2013 Conference in Asheville, NC May 2013 Photo by Bennington

In Brazil, ArborGen is also working to unleash GE eucalyptus, and is racing against its main competitor, Futuragene, which is owned by paper giant Suzano Papel y Celulose. GE tree researcher and industry spokesperson Steven Strauss is working to improve poplars for use in pulp and biofuel manufacturing through his research at Oregon State University. Strauss also recently received Department of Energy funding for his work.

The Canadian government has funded research into GE trees like black spruce and poplars. A Canadian company, Okanagan Specialty Fruits, is hoping to unleash its GE 'Arctic Apple' soon. GE papaya orchards already exist in Hawaii, and in late September of this year, a group of activists destroyed around 100 of them. Unknown quantities of GE black poplar have already been planted in China.

America's southeast is surely a testing ground for a new kind of economy. But the Bioeconomy and GE tree industry is really the same old emperor dressed in new clothing. GE trees stand to benefit the growing wood pellet export industry in the southeast, which resembles the centuries old tradition of resource extraction in the new world for markets in Europe. Trees are processed into pellets in the south, then shipped across the Atlantic Ocean to be burned in coal plants in Europe, where they are touted as 'green energy' despite the fact that wood pellets releases more carbon into the atmosphere than coal.

Tree Biotechnology — and biotechnology in general — have impacts that are so far-reaching that we can hardly understand the long-term consequences. What we do know is that biotech and the promises of the Bioeconomy does not offer the kind of revolutionary, systemic solutions to climate change many social movements are fighting for

today. GE trees will serve their corporate creators quite well, securing mankind's domination over nature and sustaining exploitative resource extraction far into the future, or at least until ecosystem collapse occurs in part due to their tinkering.

This fledgling industry — which can surely be defeated before it destroys forests and forest-dependent communities across the world — presents us with an important question: Will we allow the continued colonization of all things sacred, including the concept of life itself, at the cost of many and for the benefit of an elite few; or will movements across the world rise up in defence of life and nature, defeating the Bioeconomy and abolishing all forms of domination?

It is a question we must answer, and fast.

This industry certainly hasn't gone unchallenged: in May of 2013, hundreds of people descended upon a GE Tree conference in Asheville, NC. This fall, activists on a speaking tour on the dangers of GE trees were kicked off the campus at the University of Florida, and were spied on by the FBI. GE trees in the UK, New Zealand, and most recently, Hawaii, have been ripped up or cut down.

However, the industry's increasing momentum requires massive opposition — legal challenges, grassroots organizing and direct action — if there is any chance of stopping what Anne Petermann, Executive Director of Global Justice Ecology Project and coordinator of the International Campaign to STOP GE Trees calls, "the biggest threat to forests since the invention of the chainsaw." Δ

Winter News Briefs:

October 23rd, 2013 to January 10th, 2014

By Allison Parker, Bryan Hill, and Peggy Karamazov

OCTOBER 23

Montreal, QC: The offices of Team Denis Coderre, mayoral candidate, had their windows broken and anarchist graffiti left behind, referencing by-law P-6 which has shut down mobilizations in the city since the student strike in 2011.

OCTOBER 24

California: A 13 year-old boy carrying a replica of an assault rifle was shot and killed by a policeman who believed the gun was real.

NOVEMBER 6

Burnaby, BC: Two ATMs and four windows were broken at an RBC on East Hastings. A Chevron pumping station had 12 pump lines slashed. Both were targeted by the Informal Anarchist Front for funding the Tar Sands and Pacific Trails Pipelines.

NOVEMBER 14

Elsipogtog, NB: Over one hundred people blocked Hwy 11 to prevent SWN (a Houston-based energy company) trucks from doing fracking exploration with seismic testing. They successfully stopped the trucks with one arrest.

NOVEMBER 19

Elsipogtog, NB: RCMP officers and cruisers were pelted with rocks during a confrontation stemming from SWN fracking exploration. Hwy 11 was repeatedly shut down. There were 5 arrests.

NOVEMBER 20

Saugeen Lake, ON: The MNR has told Darlene Necan to stop building a home for herself on her family's traditional trap-line. Necan plans to continue to build regardless of MNR's threat to fine her.

NOVEMBER 26

Northern Alberta: Members of the Lubicon Cree Nation set up a blockade of an access road to a fracking site on their traditional territory.

DECEMBER 2

Elsipogtog, NB: Tire fires were set up across Hwy 11 by the Mi'kmaq warrior society, blocking traffic all day. The fires were set and defended as a provincial court approved the extension of an injunction against anyone stopping SWN fracking operations.

International: Hwy 11 Land Defenders from Elsipogtog called for a day of action. In response blockades, banner drops, and other actions took place in Vancouver, Victoria, Montreal, Halifax, Ottawa, Hamilton, Powell River, Toronto and internationally in Texas and Ireland.

DECEMBER 3

Barriere Lake, QC: Algonquins of Barriere Lake shut down logging operations on their traditional territory.

Toronto, ON: Members of Rising Tide Toronto locked themselves to construction equipment, halting work on Enbridge's Line 9 oil pipeline for one work day and sending 40 workers home.

DECEMBER 5

USA: Fast-food workers staged a historic one-day strike in over 100 cities, protesting the minimum wage of \$7.25 and demanding a living wage of \$15.00 and the right to organize a union without retaliation (see page 25).

Montreal, QC: Two gentrifying businesses in the neighbourhood of Hochelaga were vandalized and their windows smashed. Leaflets were left behind, a snippet of one below:

"Against your aggression, we attack. Tell your friends and your bourgeois insurance companies that Hochelaga is a hostile environment for investors and will remain so."

DECEMBER 6

Northern Alberta: Shell Canada's Jackpine tar sands mine expansion has received approval from the federal government despite being noted to result in severe and irreversible damage that environment could not support. The mine's expansion will cause the permanent loss of thousands of hectares of wetlands, harming migratory birds, caribou and other wildlife.

New Brunswick: SWN Resources announced that they will be ending their fracking exploratory drilling in Kent County, NB until 2015. The Mi'kmaq community of Elsipogtog has been at the forefront of anti-shale gas exploration in the territory since early summer, capturing national and international headlines.

DECEMBER 8

Canada: Former Assembly of First Nations chief Phil Fontaine has been hired on by TransCanada in order to push tar sands pipelines through in native communities. As Chief of the AFT, Phil Fontaine brought the 2010 Winter Olympics to Coast Salish territory against local opposition.

DECEMBER 12

Mexico: The newly elected Mexican PRI party President Enrique Pena Nieto announced the approval of a controversial oil and gas bill which will allow privatization of the sector to foreign companies for the first time since 1938.

Yemen: Fifteen people were killed when a drone mistakenly struck their party while en route to a wedding. Three days later, the Yemeni parliament voted in a non-binding resolution to place a moratorium on drone strikes, reflecting a growing anxiety over Washington's drone program in Yemen.

DECEMBER 12

Chicago: Mark Neiweem was paroled after spending almost 20 months in prison. He was charged in the lead up to anti-NATO protests after asking an undercover police office to help him acquire incendiary devices.

DECEMBER 14

Lindsay, ON: Supporters demonstrated in solidarity with the immigration detainees held in maximum security prison (see page 25).

DECEMBER 16

British Columbia: The provincial court of BC found that the province violated the rights of incarcerated mothers when it cancelled a program allowing inmates to serve time with their babies. If the government decides to not pursue an appeal, BC Corrections has six months to fulfill the direction from the court.

DECEMBER 17

Elsipogtog, NB: Mi'kmaq warrior James Pictou was released from New Brunswick jail two months after his initial arrest. After pleading guilty to mischief, obstruction, assault, disturbing the peace and uttering threats towards a police dog, Pictou's sentence includes two years probation, three months house arrest and six months curfew. He is prohibited from entering Kent County (the part of Mi'kmaq territory where protests occurred) and must pay a \$4500 fine.

Northern Alberta: Nearly four weeks since the Lubicon Cree Nation began blocking access to a fracking exploration road, the Nation was served with an injunction. The judge granted a six-month injunction on the road so that oil company PennWest Petroleum Ltd could continue drilling in the area.

DECEMBER 18

Russia: Russian MPs have approved amnesty for over 20,000 prisoners in Russia including the punk group Pussy Riot and members of Greenpeace's Arctic 30. While this amnesty was officially decreed to mark the 20th anniversary of Russia's post-Soviet constitution, it has also been decried as a public relations stunt leading up to the 2014 Olympic games in Sochi.

DECEMBER 18

Oregon: Climate justice groups in Oregon blocked the shipment of a heat exchanger headed to the tar sands by locking themselves to two vehicles. Sixteen activists were arrested. The "megaload" has faced opposition ever since it began its move; two weeks ago members of Rising Tide North America occupied the shipper at the offices of Omega Morgan's in Fife, WA and again last week in Portland, OR. This is the first of three megaload shipments through the region.

DECEMBER 19

Elsipogtog, NB: 21 year-old Germain Breau was handed an additional 15 criminal charges by New Brunswick police in connection with the anti-shale gas protests on October 17th. Breau's charges include assault police and pointing a firearm at police, bringing his total charges to 19.

British Columbia: A Federal Joint Review Panel has given approval to the highly controversial Northern Gateway project. The project will carry tar sands oil from Alberta to the BC coast in a 1,178 km pipeline through mountains, watersheds and wilderness.

Ontario: The family of Levi Schaeffer, who was killed by two police officers in 2009, won a long-sought legal victory in the Supreme Court of Canada. The victory makes it illegal for police to consult with a lawyer when writing statements pertaining to police-related deaths.

DECEMBER 20

Elsipogtog, NB: A women from Elsipogtog First Nation was arrested and charged for confronting media representatives on Oct. 19th two days after an RCMP raid which saw police forced back and their vehicles torched.

Elsipogtog, NB: Coady Stevens was sentenced to time served for charges of assault, obstruct and utter threats against an officer. Coady was held in prison since his arrest during an RCMP raid against a Mi'kmaq blockade of fracking equipment on Oct. 17th, 2013.

Canada: The Supreme Court ruled several of Canada's prostitution laws unconstitutional in the case of *Bedford vs. Canada* (see page 26).

DECEMBER 27

Oklahoma: Carter Camp, American Indian Movement warrior and veteran of the reoccupation of Wounded Knee in 1973, passed away on the Ponca Indian tribal land he called home. He was 72.

DECEMBER 29

South Dakota: This day marked the 123rd anniversary of the Wounded Knee massacre. This day in history saw 150 Lakota men, women and children killed by the US 7th Cavalry on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. Wounded Knee is remembered by some as the last battle of the American Indian War. Resistance is remembering.

DECEMBER 31

International: Noise demonstrations were held outside of prisons, jails and holding facilities across the world.

Hamilton, ON: Sixty people shot off fireworks outside of Barton St. Jail. Prisoners were seen banging on the windows and participants waved from both sides of the wall. The prison was spray-painted during the demo.

JANUARY 1, 2014

Ontario: Ontario is one of five provinces that has reinstated health coverage for people claiming refugee status in Canada. Refugees can begin to claim coverage for services like hospitals, among others, as of January 1st, 2014. The federal government cut refugee healthcare in June 2012, claiming that the cuts would save taxpayers 100 million-dollars over five years. The government's military budget was estimated at \$20 billion in March, 2013.

Chiapas, Mexico: Today marks the twentieth anniversary of the EZLN indigenous uprising, which saw cities across the state of Chiapas seized by armed guerillas. A number of Zapatista communities remain autonomous zones from the state of Mexico today.

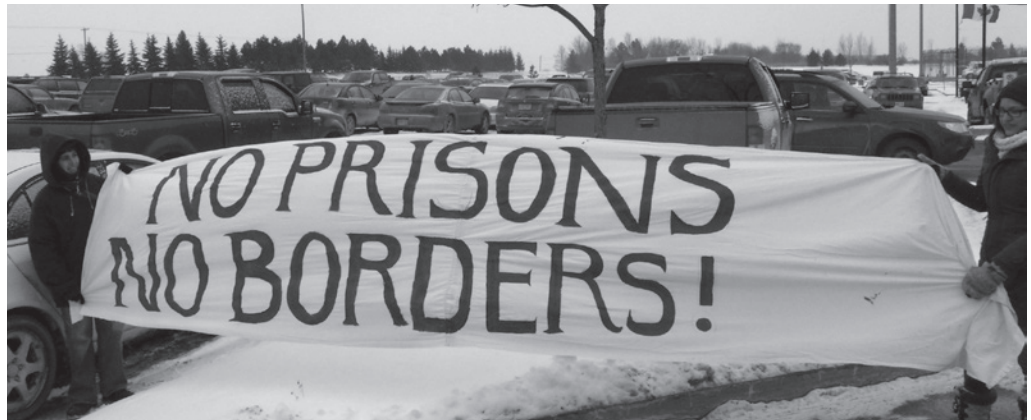
JANUARY 5

Mexico City: Three anarchist comrades were arrested in the evening after a government building and Nissan dealership were attacked with rocks and Molotov cocktails. Two of the arrested are from Canada and are being held in a secret prison without bail on charges of terrorism and sabotage.



THIS PAGE

Demonstrators outside of CECC in Lindsey where the Immigrant Migrant Strike took place last month. Photo by Gaeme Bacque



JANUARY 6

Elsipogtog, NB: Tyson Peters was arrested and charged for confronting media representatives on Oct. 19th.

JANUARY 7

New Orleans, LA: The state of Louisiana is seeking to reinstate a murder conviction against Albert Woodfox, the only member of the Angola 3 still behind bars. The Angola 3 were imprisoned members of the Black Panther Party accused of killing a prison guard during an uprising in 1972.

Pennsylvania: A group of former peace activists has come forward to claim a burglary of classified documents from an FBI office in 1971. The burglary declassified a number of documents on the FBI's secret program, COINTELPRO, which was used to infiltrate, monitor and disrupt social movements. Although COINTELPRO was officially closed, its tactics continue to this day in the work of the FBI, CIA, and NSA. In Canada similar tactics are used by the RCMP, CSIS and CSEC.

JANUARY 8

Plaster Rock, NB: A CN freight train carrying crude oil and propane derailed, causing a fire which consumed 16 railcars. The fires took several days to extinguish itself.

JANUARY 9

Elsipogtog, NB: A third person from the Elsipogtog First Nation was arrested in connection with a confrontation with media representatives on Oct. 19th. This is the latest instance of repression following the raid on an anti-fracking encampment.

JANUARY 10

USA: A new study says nearly half of all African-American men will be arrested by the time they are 23 years-old. A survey of 7,000 black males from 1997 to 2008 published in the journal *Crime & Delinquency* showed that 48 percent had been arrested by the time they turned 23.

Nunavet: Suicide rates reached a record high in 2013. Nunavet Inuit are 13 times more likely than the rest of Canada to commit suicide. Social scientists attribute this to a lack of social services. [△](#)

These News Briefs were compiled from a variety of sources, including: *The Two Row Times*, *Warrior Publications*, *Denver ABC*, *Earth First News Wire*, *anarchistnews.org*, *War on Society*, *Media Co-op*, *Democracy Now* and mainstream media.

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www.guelphpeak.org

REPORTBACK: MIGRANT ADVOCATES RALLY IN LINDSAY

On December 14th, 2013 over one hundred (im)migrant justice supporters gathered at Central East Correctional Centre in Lindsay, Ontario to show support for the immigration detainees striking within CECC's walls (see images on page 24). One participant described the experience:

"We stood in the blizzard, in -15 degrees, for almost an hour, cheering until our toes and fingers went numb and we couldn't chant anymore. The detainees banged on the windows. They were those two-way windows, where we could only see solid blue, but the detainees could see us, and we could hear them banging on their windows. The whole prison seemed to be thundering.

Some detainees called me from the prison an hour later while I was on the bus home. I was talking to a man from Liberia who lived in Canada for twenty years prior to his detention. I couldn't hear what he was saying because of what sounded like a deafening siren in the background. 'What's happening in there?' I asked. 'It sounds like a riot.'

He responded, 'They are yelling 'Freedom!' They've been yelling 'Freedom' in unison for hours.' It took a few moments of listening to the sounds coming over the shitty prison phones before I could hear it: their voices, chanting 'Freedom, freedom, freedom.'

With every word, the prison walls get weaker." ▲

The Fight For Fifteen

Minimum-wage workers fight for living wages across the US. by e.war

"Productivity and the minimum wage generally increased at the same rate from 1947 to 1969, during [America's] postwar boom years. Using a conservative benchmark, economists ...determined that the minimum wage would be \$16.54 today if it had continued to keep pace with productivity."

*Richard Eskow,
economic consultant*

ON THURSDAY DECEMBER 5TH, 2013 THOUSANDS of minimum wage workers in the United States stepped away from the fast food counters, restaurant tables, and retail sales floors of their work places and demanded higher pay and the right to form a union without retaliation. Kicking it off at 6am EST in New York City¹, at the McDonalds just above Times Square, workers entered the restaurant along with hundreds of supporters carrying pro-union signs, chanting "We can't survive on \$7.25!" This kind of sentiment was carried throughout the day in close to one hundred cities in the US, including New York, NY; Detroit, MI; Washington, DC; Charleston, SC; Providence, RI; Pittsburgh, PA; and Chicago, IL.

This General Strike idea amongst minimum (and below-minimum) wage workers is not new. For the past two years organizers inside and outside these workplaces have been working hard to spread the idea that folks can and should stand up for their rights, and rather than feel intimidated by their workplace, they ought to be empowered by it.

Speaking about the need for these coordinated actions, an organizer with the Organization United for Respect WalMart (OUR WalMart) stated: "Rather than providing good jobs that American workers need and deserve, Walmart is trying to silence workers who are standing up with their

co-workers to live better, and spending its time and money trying to deny workers a decent day's pay."

December 5th was dubbed Low-wage Workers Rising: Fighting for a Livable Wage, or simply, The Fight For Fifteen. This day of action is a continuation of a campaign that began last year.

In response to these actions major fast food chains and other retail conglomerates have responded that their restaurants/ shops create work opportunities and provide training and the ability to advance. Specifically, Burger King has reissued its statement on past protests, saying its restaurants have provided an entry point into the workforce for millions of Americans. While what these corporations are stating is true, they fail to address the pressing issue that the larger part of their workforce are not just new workers. They are predominantly disadvantaged, unskilled, folks of colour, folks out of work in their field, or folks who can't find any other work. There is no reason why people who work at these jobs cannot make a living wage, or at least enough to pay basic living costs such as rent. These multi-billion dollar corporations are making all of their cash off of the backs the workers that sell their cheap commodities. Wal-Mart, McDonalds, and those of their ilk have begun to retaliate to the protests by formally reprimanding and/or firing individuals that partake in these protests. Companies legitimize their actions by claiming that workers are "threatening customer service by violating attendance rules." These claims are on shaky legal grounds, but are enough to scare workers back in line. However, such is an even better reason to stick together and fight for better living wages and the right to organize. ▲

¹. "In New York City, there are more than 57,000 fast-food workers. Their median wage is \$8.89/hour, the lowest of any occupation in the city." Allison Kilkenny, www.popularresistance.org/fast-food-strikes-hit-100-cities-thursday





The *Bedford* Decision:

Canada's Prostitution Laws Ruled Unconstitutional

By Fannie Hustle


ON DECEMBER 20TH, 2013, THE SUPREME COURT OF Canada declared several of Canada's prostitution laws unconstitutional. In *Bedford vs. Canada*, three women with experience in the sex trade launched a court challenge against sections of the Criminal Code criminalizing prostitution. Currently, the act of exchanging sex for money is not illegal, but other aspects of the sex trade are.

It's tempting to look at the decision as a significant challenge to the marginalization of sex workers and a stepping stone to full decriminalization of the sex trade. Although *Bedford* is neither, it does have the potential to drastically impact the ways sex workers conduct our business. Briefly, the decision means that the federal government must strike down the laws ruled unconstitutional and create new ones within one year. The three laws specified are:

1. Section 213(1)(C), "communicating for the purposes of prostitution," which criminalizes the verbal or physical solicitation of clients as well as communication about services and rates. This law forces street-based workers to conduct their business in places where they're least likely to be noticed and reported and where they're more likely to be vulnerable to violence. It also makes all workers' means of screening their clients and setting emotional and physical boundaries illegal. Section 213(1)(c) accounts for over 90% of prostitution-related convictions, mostly of street workers (who are disproportionately indigenous women), rather than clients. This section is often cited as the most dangerous to sex workers' safety and health.
2. Section 210, "the operation of common bawdy-houses," which criminalizes some indoor work environments, like working from home or renting or leasing property and running a sex work-based business out of it. This section forces many workers to navigate the risks associated with outdoor, street-based work.
3. Section 212 (1)(j), "living off the avails of prostitution," is intended to prohibit organized crime rings and pimps from profiting off of sex

workers' exploited labour. According to the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, "the living- on-the-avails offence does not require proof of coercion. Escort agency owners have been convicted of living on the avails in the absence of coercion."

It's important to stress that *Bedford* is not a panacea for sex workers' rights in Canada. Criminalization and stigmatization of sex workers do not exist in a vacuum: they are deeply rooted in misogyny, racism, and poverty – social conditions that are legislated as well as encultured. In a statement that should surprise absolutely no one, Justice Minister Peter McKay responded that the government is "exploring all possible options to ensure the criminal law continues to address the significant harms that flow from prostitution to communities, those engaged in prostitution and vulnerable persons." In other words, the government will do everything it can to ensure that sex workers stay in the margins, where the dominant culture's notions of morality, gender roles, white supremacy, and work require us to be.

Legal challenges like *Bedford* should be viewed with cautious optimism. We don't need the state, or anyone, to legitimize our dignity: we affirm it ourselves, in our communities, with our families, friends and lovers. We do need the state to back the fuck off, but they're not the whole picture. The police, courts, and social services work in tandem with cultural narratives of sex workers as immoral, deviant and diseased to silence us, shame us and chip away at our freedoms. For these and a dozen other reasons, we are always going to need radical grassroots sex worker movements, self-defence and self-organization, and solidarity with other communities who recognize the intersection of their struggles with ours. No asshole justice minister or chief judge is going to give us what we need. We'll have to hustle hard, have each others' backs and fight — joyfully and fiercely — until we get ours. 

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Art & Activism: The Beehive Collective & MesoAmérica Resiste

Members of the Beehive Design Collective describe their newest poster, *MesoAmérica Resiste*, an inspiring collaborative project ten years in the making. Interviewed by Danielle Hagel

The Peak: Can you describe how GMOs and biotechnology fit into the ongoing colonization and exploitation of Mesoamérica?

The Beehive: In Mexico and Central America, corn stands out as a significant crop — especially when it comes to GMOs and the threat of losing heirloom varieties to genetic pollution. GMOs appear in a few places throughout the graphic. The poster is printed on two sides, so if we look at the outside first, along both sides of the colonizers map are scenes about forced displacement of people off the land. Corn plays a key part in both of these image sequences, and they help describe how corn is economically and culturally important. The stories of GMOs are interwoven in these other layers of stories about economy, land and culture.

On the left-hand side of the poster, economic pressure comes from corn dumping — drawn as a truck with a US flag pouring corn into a scales where the local market can't weigh up. Farmer Bee then takes a hazardous journey through migration and factory work, and ultimately tries to migrate North across the border.

On the righthand side of the poster, another parallel vicious cycle illustrates the violence of war and militarism and connections with industrial agriculture as another form of violence against people and the land.

1. Swarms of ants rise and fall as a symbol of popular movements in a vicious cycle of resistance and repression.
2. A tank-tractor symbolizes the war

machine merged with industrial agriculture, assaulting a mother stalk of corn with GMO seed and a toxic medley of chemicals.

3. An army of genetically modified corn marches out of the corporate Trojan horse — it's sponsored by big agribusiness and pretending to be a solution to the ecological crisis as well as the food supply.
4. These "corn"quistadors are destroying Indigenous corn and food sovereignty with genetic contamination. People who spoke with Bees during the research for this graphic drew the parallel between the invasion of GMO corn and the biological warfare used by Spanish conquistadors in spreading disease to Indigenous peoples of the Americas.



ILLUSTRATIONS

Excerpts from
*MesoAmérica
Resiste*. Numbers
correspond with
the article.
By The Beehive
Design Collective

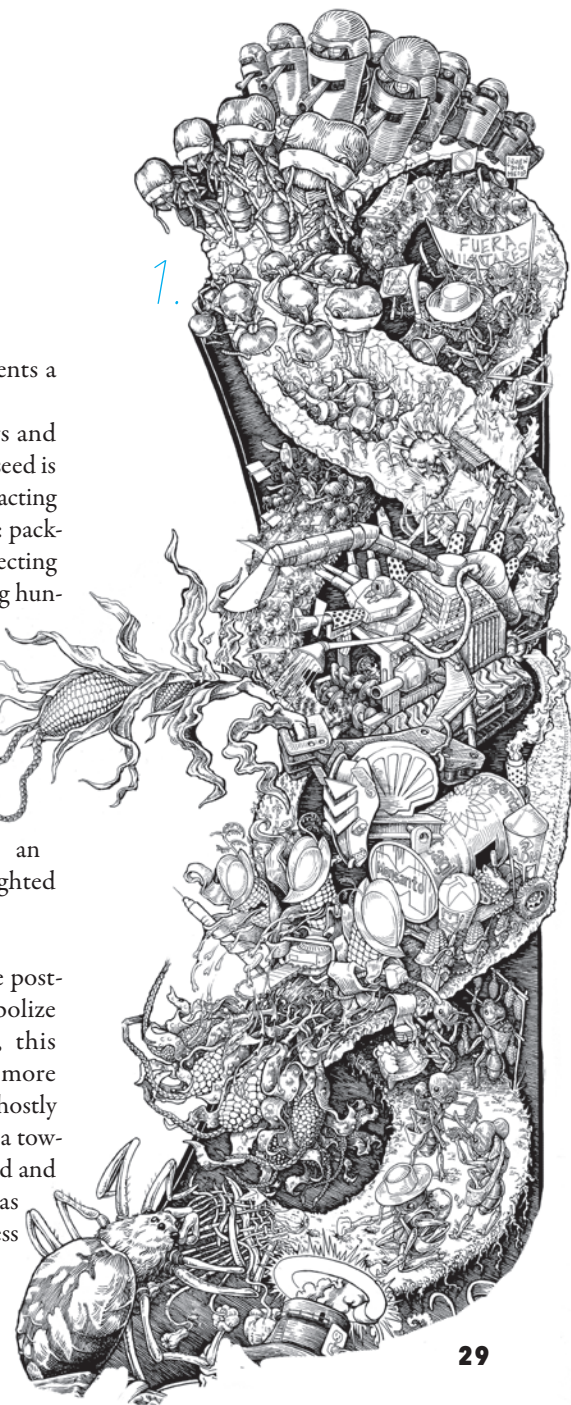
One of these characters wields a chain saw to deforest large areas for monocrop plantations, while another has a gas pump for ethanol — an agrofuel made from corn. This part of the poster allows us to make the connections with climate change and biofuels as a false solution — one that depletes topsoil, contaminates water and monopolizes huge areas of land in the South without seeking to reduce consumption of fuel in the global North.

5. Below it all, the ants re-emerge again as a symbol of social movements. While they are protesting at the top of the scene, here they are busy tending to the life cycle of corn that feeds and sustains their communities: sowing and saving seeds, exchanging local varieties and grinding corn into flour.
6. The orb weaving spider (mirroring the efforts of the Quetzal bird on the opposite side of the drawing) painstakingly works on weaving together topsoil and renewing the land.
7. On the inside (larger panel) of the poster, a couple of images stand out in reference to GMOs. The market illustrates local economies and biodiverse

food systems, and also represents a living seed bank.

8. All the vendors are pollinators and everywhere food is illustrated, seed is included. The creatures are interacting with the seed in different ways: packaging and exchanging seed, collecting seed and sprouting it, nurturing hundreds of local varieties of plants and forming part of a living practice of saving seed.
9. Genetically modified oil palm rushes in on a newly paved highway, alongside corn and soy, attempting to enter the local market with an array of junk food and copyrighted genetic bombs.

As opposed to previous Beehive posters that used DNA strands to symbolize genetically modified organisms, this graphic show a double helix in a more beautiful way. The two strands of ghostly animals float down from the top of a towering Ceiba tree: extinct, endangered and threatened animals are interwoven as a reminder of the interconnectedness of the web of life.





What kind of guidance did you seek from people in Central America in creating “Mesoamérica Resiste”? What individuals or organizations did you collaborate with in your work?

“Mesoamérica Resiste” is the third graphic in a trilogy (starting with the “FTAA” and then “Plan Colombia”). These three graphics, as well as “The True Cost of Coal,” were all collaboratively produced, each with a range of inputs and insights from a wider network of people working on the issues represented in the graphics. More time in the creative process is spent figuring out what to draw, than doing the drawing itself. In particular, the Beehive seeks to document stories and perspectives that are often silenced in the mainstream media – of those people and communities most directly affected by free trade and industrial development. As a group whose members are steeped in North American culture most of the time, we make an effort to do firsthand investigation outside our own social and cultural bubble. Bees have had the privilege and mobility to travel from place to place in learning about the content of the graphics.

For “Mesoamérica Resiste,” this research started with a four-month tour of the region from Puebla, south of Mexico City, to Panama. (Mesoamérica, narrowly defined, reaches from southern Mexico to part of Nicaragua; the term is

also used more broadly as a banner for social movements coming together across Central America and Mexico). A team of seven people undertook the extensive and informal, grassroots research work, mainly in the form of interviews and roundtable discussions. To give you some background, the graphic was motivated by widespread popular opposition to a development plan originally called “Plan Puebla Panama,” or the PPP. At the PPP’s outset in 2001, its goal was to connect Puebla to Panama, so the research trip of the Beehive followed this route. The intention of the PPP was to pave the way — quite literally — for Free Trade in the Americas by building a transportation, energy and industrial corridor along the length of Central America. This would connect North and South as well as crossing over the land bridge to increase the volume of trade East-West between the Atlantic and Pacific. When Colombia and the Dominican Republic joined the PPP in 2009, it was renamed Project Mesoamérica. (officially the “Mesoamerican Integration and Development Project”).

When the Beehive’s research started in 2004, there were strong regional organizing efforts taking place to oppose the PPP and call attention to the harms it would cause. The PPP’s opponents were especially worried about expropriation of Indigenous lands, forcible displacement of communities, and environmental damages.

Two members of our research team had attended a regional forum the year before and began making links with people and organizations fighting against the PPP. Once we had a few contacts we found that people were eager to link us up with more of their networks. I would say the consultations were mainly with two categories of people — non-profit organizations in urban locations, and then rural communities where we held small assemblies to seek input from a lot of people at once. In both cases the kind of information exchanged was focused on the effects of the PPP and infrastructure developments. Along with many accounts of what people were fighting against, we also heard stories of successful struggles and of community-lead initiatives like economic development, and autonomous local governance.

For instance, at one of the projects of CRIPDES in El Salvador the Bees learned about a seed library for heirloom varieties of corn, that was developed alongside a crop diversification program. Diversifying the crops (as opposed to monocrop) has ecological benefits, like being better suited to organic growing methods, and was also undertaken as an economic survival strategy: when cheap corn floods the market as a result of Free Trade local producers could fall back on marketing a variety of crops. CRIPDES, like many other groups, had their hand in

supporting communities to build sustainable, just economies from the ground up. Local production and autonomous markets and trade networks were a common theme in stories informing the poster design. Red COMAL in Honduras stands out as an extensively developed network of hundreds of producers and community stores, lead by “proconsumidores” (people working together in roles of producer consumers). Certain parts of the graphic can speak to more generalized concepts (e.g. horizontal trade) as well as being used to point to specific examples. Part of the design and collaboration process is to compile a lot of linear, wordbased information (and make a lot of lists!) and then try to sift it all together and come up with imagery to represent the common threads between the macro and the micro, the details and the bigger concepts.

After the research trip concluded and a smaller team went to work on the illustration in the studio, a second stage of our fact-checking and input-seeking began. This involved follow-up conversations with “big-picture” people — writers or analysts at international NGOs (non-governmental organizations) and educational organizations, for example. We did a lot of cross-cultural checking of our images too. A detail as small as which kind of antenna to put on a radio station, for instance, had to be checked to be sure it would be legible both in the cultural context of the US as well as Mexico and Central America. There was a lot of back and forth with lots of different, rather specialized activists who became like consultants as the illustrators and designers sketched out and finalized the drawings. Another way we’d check the images for legibility was by showing them to people who were very unfamiliar with the content.

Your work creates powerful representations of histories and ongoing social struggles. How do you negotiate the telling of these stories and being true to the experiences of folks who live them?

The intention of collaborating and doing firsthand research is so that we represent struggles accurately and respectfully. I think my description of our research process partly answers this question. It should also be acknowledged that art is a

medium that’s open to interpretation. The stories accompanying the posters change and evolve as they are told and re-told. As the graphics travel, new stories get added. In some cases there’s specific information that inspired the original design of certain image, that may or may not be repeated each time the graphic is presented publicly. And a particular image speaks to more than one event, time, place, person or history. So it’s altogether a fluid and complicated storytelling medium to negotiate. As an educator, I think it’s important to hear the stories of new stories (coming from “audiences” and storytellers alike) as well as sharing and acknowledging some of the stories that originally informed the creation of the work.

Part of the reason I think that’s important is to convey stories that are locally relevant to the places where the graphic is presented. Personally, as someone living in Toronto I would find it incomplete to share information about issues in Mesoamérica without making the links to local struggles that are connected to similar root causes. The images aren’t meant to talk about colonization as a problem far away, but as a story that repeats itself and is part of our immediate surroundings.

What do you want folks who experience your artwork to take away from it?

Since the Beehive’s work is really multifaceted, I’m sure you’d get different answers to this question depending on who you ask (and how they’re involved in the work.) Anyhow, one of the goals of putting everything onto the same page is to draw the links between “single issues” and illustrate the bigger picture and intersectionalities. So the idea is that people walk away from a Beehive poster or presentation with a better understanding of how one specific thing that they’re working on in their corner is a piece of a much larger puzzle of interconnected struggles. In terms of the artwork I personally hope that people are inspired to use the images (they’re anti-copyright!) and that people take away ideas for reproducing, distributing and/or adapting parts of the graphic into their own organizing /educating work. Also in the bigger movement, more artwork and more kinds of art for political

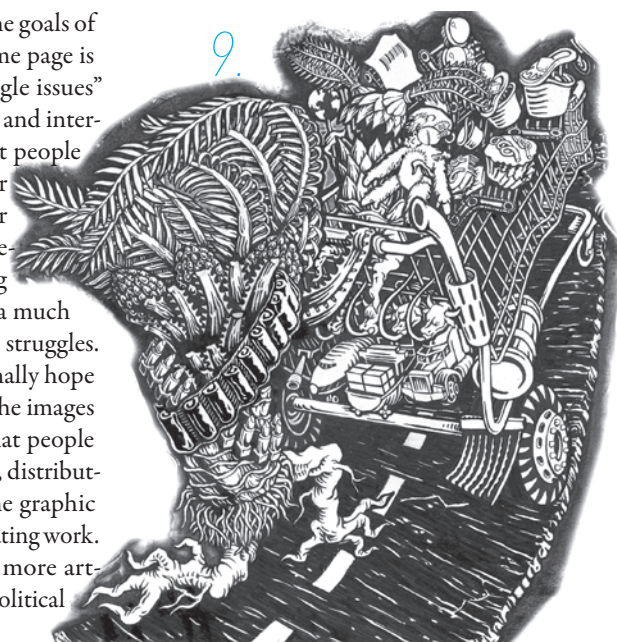
purposes is created, I personally hope that will inspire others to see art as a political tool and to use imagery for building more compelling and powerful campaigns.

What elements of working on “Mesoamérica Resiste” were the most powerful and impactful for you and your approach to struggle?

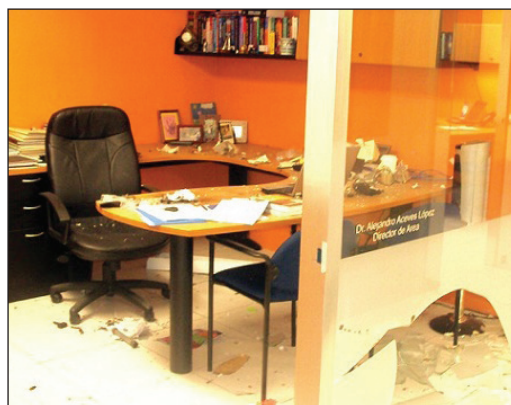
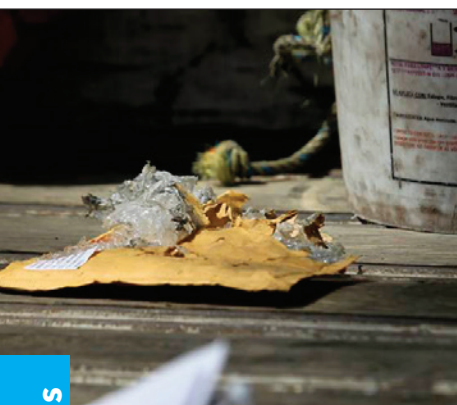
Participation in the graphic design and production has taught me a lot of lessons. I think I picked up a lot of useful approaches to creative collaboration — not being too attached to one’s own ideas for example! While there are certainly setbacks and slowdowns caused by working with multiple people (especially who are juggling other commitments inside and outside of the Hive), the outcome shows the potential of multiple minds and hands to be more creative than one artist working alone. Though when I got involved, I definitely underestimated the commitment, time and energy it would take to complete such a project!

Many hands have contributed in different ways to the completion of this project. Not all of that process is visible when you look at the final product. It’s humbling to see all that people put into the making of this poster. △

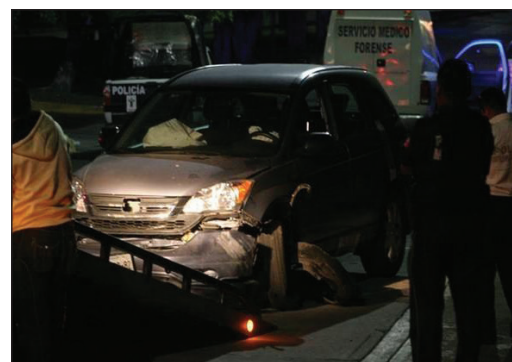
The Beehive Design Collective will be visiting Guelph with their giant posters as part of their spring MesoAmérica Resiste tour on March 26th.



THE PEAK



ANALYSIS



LEFT Images of damage left after bombings claimed by ITS. Photos from Mexican media

Fear Under a Microscope: ITS & the Conflict With Nanotechnology

A closer look at the ideas which drive *Individualidades Tendiendo a lo Salvaje* (ITS) to attack nanotechnology researchers across the state of Mexico. By Scarlet Sable

"The continual advancement of technology will worsen the situation. The more the system grows, the more disastrous will be the consequences of its failure."

-*Individualists Tending toward the Wild*, third communiqué, August 9th, 2011

INTRODUCTION

AS 2013 CAME TO A CLOSE, RESEARCHERS AT THE Institute of Biotechnology at the National Autonomous University of Mexico continue to have charged conversations amongst themselves over their work, but their minds will likely stray from their experiments to thank the patron saints that they are still alive. This year saw the second assassination attempt on researchers and their colleagues.

Since 2010, a series of attacks have been carried out against the institutions and researchers at Mexican universities associated with the development of nanotechnology and biotechnology. Though some of these acts remained unclaimed, the majority have been claimed by a few terroristic anti-civilization groups. The most consistent group calls itself *Individualidades tendiendo a lo Salvaje* (ITS) or in English, Individualists Tending toward the Wild.

ITS defines their group as "...an anti-industrial, anti-technological, and anti-civilization group formed by radical environmentalists."¹ They stand out as one of the groups willing to go to extremes in their critique of science, technology, the domination of nature and leftist politics. The most predominant controversy about this group is not their analysis, but rather their methods and tactics.

ITS has claimed at least seven attempted attacks on biotechnology and nanotechnology researchers' lives; the majority of which have missed their mark. The attempts, which utilized parcel bombs, incendiary devices, and guns, resulted in

between two and five unintended injuries of postal workers and security guards² and injuries of two targeted researchers. Most significantly, on November 8th, 2011, biotechnology researcher Ernesto Méndez Salinas was assassinated by a shot to the head on Teopanzaolco Avenue in Cuauhnáhuac, Mexico. The assassination was claimed two years later, on February 18th, 2013 in the seventh ITS communiqué, which surfaced after police claimed they had arrested those responsible for Salinas' death.

These actions inevitably beg the question, why do ITS want to kill scientists? Judging by the insinuating remarks to the overt threats of ITS in their communiqués, it seems to me that their driving intention is not to target a few individuals, but to sow seeds of terror in the hope that fear may force scientists to back away from their research.

The media has called them terrorists and ITS themselves embrace the term, stating in their third communiqué:

"...they call us terrorists, those useless members of industrial society, who know that we take this term as a compliment ... [and] if they categorize us as terrorists, they are right, because our goal is to mutilate and even kill these scientists, researchers, professors and other scum who are reducing the Earth to mere urbanized waste."

1 Fourth Communiqué Released: Sept. 21st, 2011

2 These numbers vary upon reports, but ITS has only claimed two attacks in which unintended targets were injured.

Although I believe a criticism of ITS' use of parcel bombs is due — if only for their low success rate and high margin of error — debating the effectiveness and ethics of their tactics is not the intention of this article. Rather, I am more interested in looking at what motivates ITS to target individuals and institutions in a bloody struggle against modern science and technology.

NANOTECHNOLOGY

In order to understand their motives, we must get a grasp of what nanotechnology is. A pro-nanotechnology article published in *The Guardian*, "A User's Guide to Nanotechnology", defines it as:

"...a technology that operates on the nanoscale, about one billionth of a metre. If a living cell were a large city, then a nanometre would be about the size of a car. Nanotechnology is the art of engineering down at this hard-to-fathom scale."³

Due to its broad definition nanotechnology — like biotechnology — encompasses numerous fields of study with applications in industry and military, and has already been used in hundreds of commercial products.

In their first communiqué, which heavily critiques nanotechnology, ITS describes the faith of scientists developing nanotechnologies, offering a long list of medical and environmental solutions nanotech advocates have dreamed up to justify their work.⁴ ITS sarcastically calls the collective beliefs of nanotech advocates, "...an innumerable list of 'wonders' ...thought up by those who persist in nanometrically developing another 'superior way of life'."

In their first communiqué, ITS identifies several fields of nanotechnology which they anticipate could have catastrophic side effects. They cite the potentials of nanorobots and nanoparticles as two developments which could be used for terrible ends. They write that nanoparticles could "...travel at a very high speed inside the body, [invading] the bloodstream and [penetrating] organs... where they destroy cell membranes, where they can spray toxic material and create a reaction much more agonizing and lethal than nuclear contamination. These manipulated particles can be inhaled by humans, plants and animals alike."

In their fourth communiqué, ITS quotes at length from Harold Kroto, winner of the Nobel Prize in Chemistry and molecular engineer Erik Drexler's critiques of nanotechnology from within the scientific community. Both scientists offer foreboding predictions of the consequences of nanotechnology. Erik Drexler's 1986 book, called

Engines of Creation, is quoted at length, citing his fears of nanoparticle bacteria entering the ecosystem, replicating and out competing all life, and turning the globe into a ball of "grey goo." (Considering that science lacks any thorough understanding of the impacts of nano and biotech organisms entering the environment, Drexler later retracted this critique stating he wished he'd never used the term "grey goo.")

Even as Drexler assures the world that nanotechnology is safe, other scientists such as Bill Joy, chief scientist of Sun Microsystems, continue to offer scepticism. In his article "Why the Future Doesn't Need Us" published in *Wired Magazine*, Joy states:

"The experiences of the atomic scientists clearly show the need to take personal responsibility, the danger that things will move too fast, and the way in which a process can take on a life of its own. We can, as they did, create insurmountable problems in almost no time flat. We must do more thinking up front if we are not to be similarly surprised and shocked by the consequences of our inventions."

Throughout their writings, ITS demonstrate that they are well researched in the industry of nanotechnology in Mexico, explaining who the major players are and how business interests network with researchers. However, one weakness which stands out for me in their writings is the fact that although nanotechnology has existed for over 30 years, ITS' critiques of nanotechnology rely almost exclusively on their anticipation of a crisis somewhere in the near future as these technologies advance. Nanotechnology today has already had far-reaching effects on the environment and the conceptions of what is possible for military and industrial development. Focusing only on dystopic futures leaves the reader with the impression that ITS' motivations originate in part from paranoia.

'NOT JUST THE ATOMS, THE MOLECULES'

Explicitly stated throughout ITS' communiqués is the fact that their critiques are not exclusively based on the potential consequences of nanotechnology. Borrowing heavily from anti-civilization theorists, they identify urbanization, industrialism and state governance as some of the institutions responsible for the continued domination of human and non-human life. They believe that throughout society, both wild nature and our own wild instincts are being destroyed.

³ A User's Guide to Nanotechnology by Penny Sarchet & David Adam (*The Guardian* 2012)

⁴ First communiqué, released April 27th, 2011

Another influence on ITS' analysis is the writings of the Unabomber, Ted Kaczynski. Kaczynski led a seventeen-year campaign against people involved in complex technologies in the US, killing three people and injuring twenty-three. ITS' tactic of sending targeted parcel bombs imitates Kaczynski's, as well as their language, which regularly uses the term Techno-Industrial System which they define as,

"... [referring] to the conjunction of physical components as well as conceptual ones (values) that include complex Technology, science, industry, Civilization and artificiality. The Techno-industrial System is the target to strike because from it (and its population [the Techno-industrial Society]) emanates the functioning, improvement and perpetuation of the megamachine called Civilization."⁵

In their fourth communiqué, ITS even addresses the question of if they might be Unabomber copycats. They state that they are indebted to Kaczynski's work but differ on a few points, which they don't elaborate on.

Within their systemic critique, they identify science and technology as being at the forefront of a continued war against the wild, which is why they choose to target them. From the beginning of their first communiqué, ITS maintain that "Nanotechnology is the furthest advancement that may yet exist in the history of anthropocentric⁶ progress. It consists in the total study, the scrutiny and the manipulation and domination of all the smallest elements, invisible to human eyes."

ITS elaborate on this idea in their third communiqué, stating that, "nanotechnology focuses on and situates itself in strategic areas for the continuation of Domination." They identify genetic engineering as the act of domination of flora and fauna and medical research as an effort to control death. Again, they state that the strongest motivation for the pursuit of nanotechnology is the desire to develop the nano-military field to expand government power domestically and abroad.

WILD INSTINCTS IN AN ISOLATING WORLD

Viewing their struggle as a spectrum of opposing forces — with technology and civilization on one end — ITS places themselves among nature and the wild. They claim that they are defending themselves from the aggression of civilization.

In their flowery language, they describe their expectations of a life of struggle:


"Please! Let us see the truth, plant our feet on the ground and let leftism and illusions fly from our minds. The revolution has never existed, nor have revolutionaries; ...in this dying world only Individual Autonomy exists and it is for this that we fight.

Although all this is useless and futile, we prefer to be defeated in a war against total domination than to remain inert, waiting, passive, or as part of all this. ...We prefer to continue the War that we have declared years ago, knowing that we will lose, but promising ourselves that we will give our greatest effort."

This acceptance of the futility of everything represents an interesting departure from the idealism of other extremists past and present. Has the pervasive alienation and isolation which the newest high-tech generation grew up with spawned a new form of hopeless resistance, one which never expects to win? This question could lead us to despair, but perhaps there is something inspiring in considering it, and the fact that, in the face of everything we stand against, someone has chosen to do anything at all.

Throughout their analysis, ITS present the popular narrative that within every scientific field is the promise of humanitarian efforts or solutions to the problems of industry and the environment. Yet rather than developing these ideals, it is the ready application in commercial goods and military development that has led governments and industry to pour billions of dollars into nanotech research. This research is destined to change the conditions of everyday life and extend the far reaching hands which seek to control everything.

After a careful reading of their writings, I remain personally conflicted about both ITS' tactics, and a number of their positions on leftism and domination. Having said that, their critique of technology and the unknown risks associated with the newest fields of science is a truly frightening, and cannot go unchallenged.

However your ideas might differ from those of Individualists Tending toward the Wild, engaging with their ideas makes it difficult to dismiss them outright as merely terrorists with a complete disconnect from reality. ITS represent just one response to the world around us, but the ideas that drive them can inspire so much more. 

You can find ITS' complete writings translated to English on the website: waronsociety.noblogs.org, which is an anarchist counter-information website dedicated to translating texts from the Spanish-speaking world.

⁵ Seventh communiqué, released February 18th, 2013

⁶ "Anthropocentric" refers to the notion that human beings are the most important creatures on the planet.

Burning Women



The European Witch Hunts,
Enclosure and the Rise of
Capitalism

Burning Women: The European Witch Hunts, Enclosure and the Rise of Capitalism

By Lady Stardust (Self-Published)
Reviewed by Allison Parker

UPON FINDING THIS ZINE AT AN ANARCHIST bookfair, it initially struck my interest due to a previous reading of Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English's *Witches, Midwives and Nurses*. Both offer a critique of patriarchy and conclude that the witch-hunts and the resulting demonization of women were a targeted campaign against the female and peasant population at large, initiated by the ruling establishment for political and economic ends. While *Witches, Midwives and Nurses* took a specific look at health care and childbearing, *Burning Women* looks at how the witch hunts, as a campaign, were used as a tool of fear and repression in order to implement specific reforms which ushered in the beginnings of capitalism.

This text states that the witch-hunts were integral to a political, economic and social power shift that was taking place in Europe during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

The witch-hunts and trials targeted women who were critical of economic restructuring. Facing poverty and oppression, networks of peasants became politicized, organizing rebellions against the ruling class. Women played a crucial role in retaliating against local landowners and the enclosures of land. In reality, these women weren't witches, devil worshippers or cultish

fanatics; they were pissed off.

As privatization of communal lands and the enclosure of pasture fields forced subsistence villagers off the land, witch trials sowed seeds of propaganda in the country towns. Witches were accused in public and anyone who tried to assist the accused woman became a suspect themselves. Public executions forced whole communities to watch as mothers, sisters, wives and friends were murdered by the state and church. Witch-hunts spread division, fear and mistrust amongst neighbours and communities.

As Enclosure Laws¹ and private property continued to force peasants off their land, a transient workforce for industrial development in the cities and towns was created. Legal changes limiting women's rights to inherit land or property forced many into reluctant marriages or a precarious status of migration. The witch-hunts were used in tandem with the law to subordinate woman into gender-based roles. Women who spoke out or challenged the imposition of these laws were subject to ridicule, attack and accusations of witchcraft. The sexual division of labor was a cornerstone

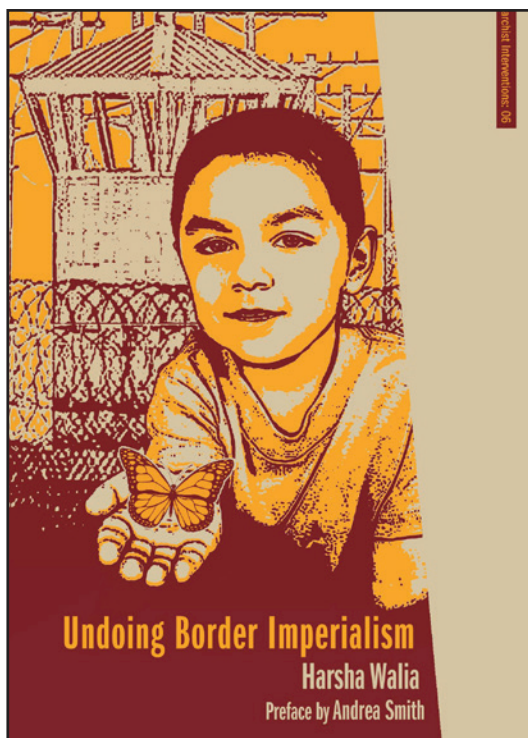
¹ The Enclosure Laws — In English social and economic history, enclosure is the process which ended traditional rights such as mowing meadows for hay, or grazing livestock on common land formerly held in the open field system. Once enclosed, these uses of the land become restricted to the owner, and it ceases to be land for commons. The process of enclosure began to be a widespread feature of the English agricultural landscape during the 16th century. The process of enclosure has sometimes been accompanied by force, resistance, and bloodshed, and remains among the most controversial areas of agricultural and economic history in England

in the development and rise of capitalism as it forced women into unpaid labor roles within the domestic realm.

The witch-hunts used the witch's supposed pact with the devil to vilify the image of the sexually and financially independent female. Female sexuality was denounced throughout the witch trials; the woman was blamed as an insatiable and aggressive temptress who owed her power to the (male) devil. The association of female sexuality with the devil served to reconstruct and criminalize all forms of sex outside the realm of procreation; non-reproductive sex became an evil act. Prostitution became illegal and many sex workers were burned as witches. This narrative further served to deny women power and agency as it fed the supposition that women were always submissive to male authority: husband, god or devil.

I quite enjoyed *Burning Women*; structurally, I found it to be well laid out, organized and coherent. I found the ideas presented in this text, specifically the demonization of women and gender violence as a tactic to break up communities and resistance movements, particularly relevant as a prevailing tool used by contemporary power structures. More broadly, I thought it was interesting how the creation of stereotypes used to criminalize populations, foster divisions and, to appropriate land and resources are the same tactics used by the state today, justified through paternalistic violence and media propaganda. △

You can find this text online at
www.zinelibrary.info



Undoing Border Imperialism

By Harsha Walia (AK Press, 2013)

Reviewed by Danielle Hagel

EVERY SO OFTEN, A BOOK COMES ALONG that effectively shapes discourse in radical social movements. It's apparent in its first dozen pages that Harsha Walia's *Undoing Border Imperialism* is going to be one of those books. All at once, *Undoing Border Imperialism* is a collective memoir of status-based oppression, a theoretical document, a history of (im)migrant justice movements, and a compelling invitation to join those struggles.

Harsha navigates the enormous task of untangling systems of racism, colonialism and capitalism (among many others) that shape state borders with an insight and clarity honed by her years of experience in (im)migrant justice movements. She presents a theoretical framework for the systemic oppression of racialized and migrating peoples that she calls *border imperialism*, defined as "the processes by which the violences and precarities of displacement and migration are structurally created as well as maintained." She describes border imperialism as encompassing four structures: displacement and exclusion of migrating peoples; criminalization of migrants; entrenched hierarchy

of status; and state-legislated exploitation of migrant labour."

The book is ground-breaking in its articulation of anti-colonial analysis as essential to border resistance. The chapter "Journeys Towards Decolonization" connects prison, social isolation and white supremacy to colonialism, and offers ideas about what it means decolonize our social justice movements.

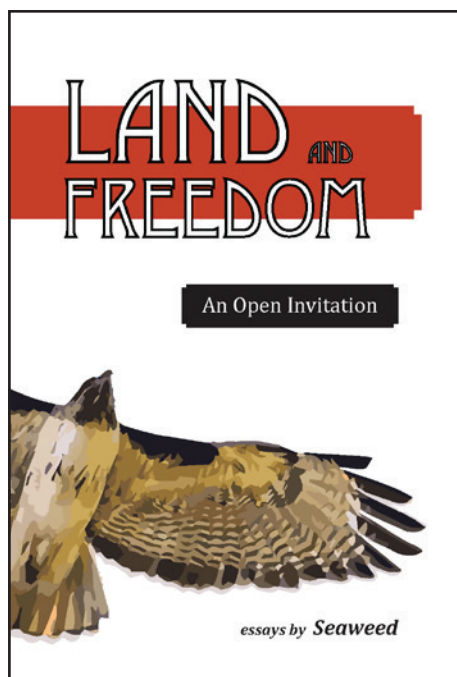
Harsha invites us into resistance by reminding readers that the practice of border policing is not limited to status and geography. The physical and conceptual impacts of what she calls "bordering practices" resonate in multiple sites of oppression: "Whether through military checkpoints, gated communities in gentrified neighbourhoods, secured corporate board rooms or gendered bathrooms, bordering practices delineate zones of access, inclusion, and privilege from zones of invisibility, exclusion, and death."

Undoing Border Imperialism's structure and presentation are part of what makes this book so powerful. Harsha's theory and analysis are interspersed with collaborative chapters, creating a text that feels critically engaging and reflexive. The two "Defiant Voices" chapters affirm personal storytelling, histories, poetry and ways of knowing as vital to resistance, grounding theory of border imperialism

in the experiences of the people who live it and resist it. In "Waves of Resistance Roundtable" and "Cartography of NOII," Harsha and members of No One Is Illegal (NOII) map the history, politics, and praxis of organizing against border imperialism. Throughout the book, Harsha gives the reader the gift of her own vulnerability as she powerfully connects her own and her family's stories to her organizing.

As displacement perpetuated by global capitalism intensifies and opposition to borders becomes more urgent, so too does the need for grassroots analysis of bordering practices in all sites of social justice organizing. *Undoing Border Imperialism* is essential reading not just for (im)migrant justice movements, but for anyone who considers themselves engaged in struggle. [△](#)

On January 18th, 2014, Harsha Walia and Deepan Budlakoti are presenting a panel discussion in Guelph. [Undoing Border Imperialism- Reclaiming Citizenship: Panel Discussion](#) will take place in U of G's University Center room 107 at 7pm.



Land and Freedom: An Open Invitation

By Seaweed (Black Powder Press, 2013)

Reviewed by Bryan Hill

THIS YEAR, BLACK POWDER PRESS released a compilation of essays by Seaweed, an author whose writings I have enjoyed for years, which re-imagine land-based struggles and propose building autonomy from a regional perspective. *Land and Freedom* is Seaweed's first published book. The compiling of these nine essays has really helped me to hash out some of the core ideas and theories behind their writing.

Most pronounced in this book is the way in which Seaweed diverges from other anarchist writers, in particular by coining new terms for old ideas. For example, Seaweed explores the idea of a 'secessionist movement', which is a term used to describe a type of land defence rooted in the creation of regional autonomy through rural subsistence. Seaweed makes the argument that resistance requires 'habitat' to nourish its rebels and provide real skills and resources, in order to begin to establish local autonomy. These 'habitats' can then function as a base to spread stateless territories and anarchy. Thanks to the compilation of these texts into a book, it became apparent that this is not just flowery language or an expression of Seaweed's aversion to using the word 'anarchist', but rather

Seaweed intentionally describing a very different conception of struggle.

In prior releases of these texts Seaweed used the word 'warrior' to describe rebels struggling for land and freedom, yet in this release, the term has been removed. I can only speculate that perhaps the author has reflected on the traditional and cultural significance of warriors in indigenous communities and resistance. I thought it was a appropriate for Seaweed to avoid that term as there is a tokenizing tendency for leftist and anarchist people to deify indigenous people in struggle which both forgets that warriors are real people, and that even settlers are capable of accomplishing heroic things. This observation complements the fact that many of Seaweed's ideas and arguments are deeply indebted to the struggles, traditions and practises of indigenous cultures and resistance to colonization in North America.

One of the strongest pieces in the book is "The Art of Rebellion." Originally published as "Of Martial Traditions and the Art of Rebellion," it introduces some of the major works of 'Martial Strategy', and provides an abridged reading for anarchists, rebels and warriors of some key martial theories and 'truths' which we should consider in our struggles for autonomy. Seaweed begins by critiquing the language of war amongst rebels and proposes instead

that an understanding of our actions is a kind of rebellion. The essay culminates in examples of land defence efforts that employ those strategies.

In my opinion, one factor that limits resistance time and time again is the fact that rebels must start fresh as each generation finds its combative spirit. Sharing stories of resistance, both our best victories and our hardest learned lessons, is a part of the struggle, and this piece is one example of offering new rebels a glimpse of our past. When this essay was originally published in 2008, it stood out as one of my favourite pieces of writing, and today, it remains on my 'must read' list for all willing rebels who takes their lives into their own hands.

Seaweed also provides us with two short histories of resistance and colonization. In 'Society of Masterless Men,' we hear the story of a band of settlers who deserted their colonies and made connections with the Mi'kmaq and Beothuk, living out their lives in the bush of Newfoundland in the 18th century. "On Parks" provides a short history of how National and Provincial Parks were used in the process of colonization, displacing indigenous people by using military force. "On Parks" was an interesting read considering the history of reclamations of "park lands" in Ontario, such as the Stoney Point reclamation of Ipperwash Park in 1995, or the current

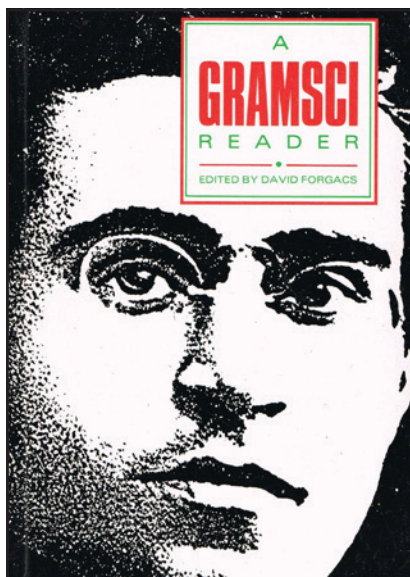
Oshkimaadziig Unity Camp in Awenda Provincial Park. Throughout the essay, Seaweed attempts to critique the environmental left's assumption that bioregions prosper best when they remain "pristine and untouched" instead the left ought to learn from the traditional practises of land stewardship and co-dependance of traditional indigenous cultures living off the land.

Of the few other theoretical pieces to round out the collection, I found myself the least interested in the first piece, called 'An Open Offer,' a utopic essay similar to Peter Gelderloos' "An Anarchist Solution to Global Warming." Both featuring flowery prose that explore what might come from a future where people's actions reflect a connection with and stewardship of the earth, and a real communal autonomy.

While I appreciate the importance of dreaming or of thoughtful considerations of how we could adapt to a world less depend on resource extraction and advanced technology, these utopian essays often fail to inspire me. With both brevity and daydreaming in mind, they more often than not ignore conflict resolution or other hard interpersonal dynamics we will face, which give the stories a two-dimensional nature. Perhaps writings of these sorts are best kept for the stateless utopias of sci-fi authors Octavia M. Butler & Ursula K. Le Guin.

I highly recommend this book but encourage the reader to find the text 'Ponds and Oceans' online and print it out separately. Originally it was intended as a collection of proverbs and should be thoughtfully considered independently as well as a part of *Land and Freedom*. The version published in this book mashes the proverbs together and ruins the flow of the text. I believe that it is a strong text but without the negative space to consider each proverb on its own, it falls short. ▲

You can get copies of the book online at [Little Black Cart](#) or [Black Powder Press](#).



The Antonio Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings 1916-1935

(Publisher Lawrence & Wishart)

Reviewed by Eugene

THE PRISON WRITINGS OF ANTONIO Gramsci (Part Two of *The Antonio Gramsci Reader*) has a lot to offer revolutionary thought, specifically his concepts around cultural hegemony and building counter-hegemony. I wish to explore this latter concept, which I'll refer to as a culture of resistance, and describe how it has been put into practice.

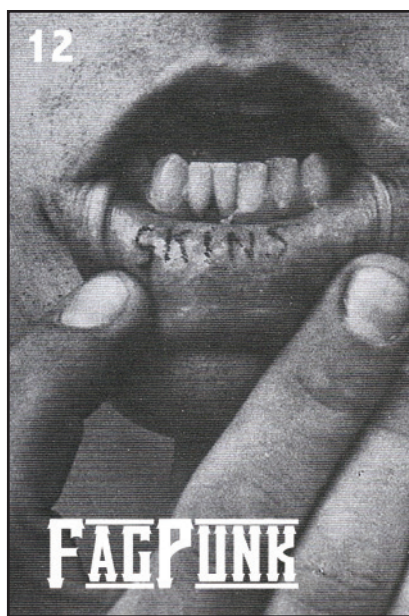
For starters, Gramsci argued that capitalism's true strength lies in how entrenched class society is in practice, in culture, and in what Gramsci called civil society. In his mind, civil society constitutes all the social interactions and institutions that did not make up the overtly coercive elements of the state-- that is, the courts, prisons, government, etc.. Unlike political society, which maintains its dominance through brute force, the civil society is the terrain in a hegemonic ideology establishes itself, coming into being when a set of ideas becomes what Gramsci calls "common sense". Thus it is common sense that cops are good, the rich work hard, the poor are lazy and that freedom isn't free. Furthermore, when a set of dominant ideas is put into practice (i.e. in a structural form) it becomes a cultural hegemony, which in turn dominates us in a far more complete way. Thus the political society actively exerts its influence throughout all of civil

society, creating an oppression that is not only self-sustaining, but one in which the oppressed freely consent to their own oppression.

For Gramsci, this form of domination is far more effective than political domination, and he believed that in order to fight it, we need to begin building a mass culture of resistance. He also believed that the individual constitutes a social relationship, and, as one self, contributes to shaping the social environment simply by interacting within it. With this in mind, Gramsci posits that a culture of resistance is by action as education and education as action, with the one not being distinguished from the other. Essentially the idea is that creating a culture of resistance is not a passive affair, nor does it occur when enough people have the 'right' idea, but is, rather, a matter of mass participation, and the reshaping of our daily lives. Examples of this may be anything from building food autonomy to non-snitching communities, or, in the case of indigenous sovereignty, perhaps realizing a shared culture with both ceremony and struggle acting as one. However, the key element is that "the opening of minds" being put into action must, on the whole, be transformative, and, for anarchists, liberating.

It is here where Gramsci's greatest contribution to revolutionary thought is contradicted and made incomplete by his own ideology. For statist such as Gramsci, counter hegemony can only ever be about substituting one state for another, rather than liberation from a state. Sadly, it exemplifies how Marxists can only revolt inside a very small box. There can be nothing liberatory about seeking to impose an equally foreign, singular, and thus oppressive hegemony of thought, which, for a Communist, is that of the Party. Essentially, this perpetuates the disempowering ideology of hierarchy. It is this kind of reductionism that will always prevent the realization of freedom, primarily because it fails to realize the infinite realities in which we struggle and how that affects the strategies we employ, and the goals we wish to achieve.

Because it has always acknowledged the universality of struggle, anarchism can best challenge and take apart the hegemonic culture of today.



Autonomy, equality, and self determination have always been anarchism's core tenets, and it is the transformative act of struggle that creates autonomy, by making the abstract concrete. Thus, collective autonomy is the foundation for any culture of resistance and without it, the struggles in which we engage will ultimately be co-opted, crushed or will fade away.

A great example of an enduring/growing struggle is the Landless Workers Movement (MST) of Brazil, which carries out mass land expropriations from agribusinesses and absentee landowners. Through liberatory ideas put into action, a genuine culture of resistance has emerged. Yet MST soon realized that their resistance was limited in particular when their children, seen as "bandits," were sent home from school. Deciding that their kids ought to have an education but not wanting them to be brainwashed, the folks of MST said 'fuck it' and expropriated public schools creating their own educational system. Based on Paulo Freire's book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and the educational theory that is found in Gramsci's prison writings, MST's education, in addition to literacy, emphasizes emancipation, equality and empowerment. The result being is that, for a large segment of Brazilian society, hegemonic culture has been replaced by a culture of resistance.

The Zapatistas are another prime example. After the colonization of what

is now Mexico, the cultural hegemony in Chiapas was one of patriarchy, domination and subservience. Yet after decades of challenging that hegemony with horizontal education and action, a culture of resistance and regional autonomy was won. The state has failed to crush the Zapatistas not because of their pop-gun arsenal or because "the whole world is watching" as liberals like to believe, but because the Zapatistas cannot be definitively defeated by anything short of re-colonization (ie, indefinite occupation and genocide).

On a final note, it is important to acknowledge that establishing a cultural hegemony is not a naturally occurring phenomenon, but rather a cornerstone of domination (and resistance for that matter). As colonial forces like missionaries, residential schools, and with the privatizing of tribal land show, cultural hegemony is an integral as well as an overtly intentional element of power. It is also a fundamental tactic of counter-insurgency, and reflected in the militarist strategy of "winning the hearts and minds" of those with whom they are at war. In understanding domination, Gramsci shows us how military and political domination is always followed by cultural domination. As anarchists engaged in class and social war, we cannot overlook the importance of resisting cultural hegemony in our struggle against the state. ▲

Fag Punk #12

By FP (*Self-Published*)

By Allison Parker

I THOUGHT I WOULD PICK UP A COPY OF THIS zine to 'put my feet in the water', and damn am I glad that I did. After reading this collection of five short stories that kept my mind racing and my legs throbbing, there's just no going back: homoerotic literature is now on my search list.

A excellent mashup of surprise sexual encounters, opportunistic voyeurism, masturbation and hidden lust, Fag Punk 12 gave me much more than a good read, it gave me the beginning of an excellent fantasy plot.

I enjoyed the layout and selection of stories included in this zine. In particular, a story entitled "The Ride," which depicts two friends off on an afternoon motorcycle trip, upon which realizing both share a common desire to fuck one another. Shortly thereafter, by the river, under a cedar tree, blanket on hand, lovers embrace, desires unleash a climactic ride as organic as the soil beneath. The style of this story bears a stark contrast to the one about a construction site fuck show witnessed by a confused youth on a hot summer day, alone in a tree fort in suburbia. Tumultuous passion and acrobatic thrusts oh yes! Talk about having fun at work.

Written with style, vivid imagery and excellent illustrations, this little diddler is a good read. I'll keep my eye out for Fag Punk 13. ▲

SECOND ANNUAL
KITCHENER-WATERLOO
ANARCHIST

BOOKFAIR
MARCH 1, 2014

radical book distros - subversive workshops &
presentations - infoshops - activities - community meal -
children's activities

when: saturday march 1, 2014 - 10am-6pm
where: lyle s. hallman faculty of social work
120 duke st. w, kitchener

for tabling requests, workshop proposals, accessibility
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"As biotechnology and the related fields of modern science continue to expand their research and develop new fields, critiques and resistance of the bioeconomy continue to grow. As history demonstrates, the world's first GMO trial site attracted the world's first GMO trial site saboteurs."

